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CAPT. F. N. MAUDE, R.E.

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AN ESSAY

By CAPTAIN F. N. MAUDE

P.S.C., LATE R.E.

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PREFACE.

THIS book was originally intended as an essay for the R.U.S. Institution Gold Medal of last year. Unfortunately, when very nearly completed, the whole MS. was lost, and only rediscovered a fortnight after the final date fixed for the receipt of the competitors' manuscripts. Since then I have rewritten it in great part, and made various additions to render it more intelligible to the lay reader.

Though I accept the existing system as the best adapted of any to our peculiar needs, it is only with the proviso that the State supplies the indispensable means to enable it to work in accordance with its original design.

The essential feature of this design was the equality of the number of battalions of infantry at home and abroad, and the maintenance of all other units, squadrons or batteries, &c., at such a standard of numerical strength that the continuity

of system in the training of the recruit may be secured: conditions which existing establishments do not fulfil, and until they are fulfilled, the attainment of that uniform excellence of all units of the Army, on which primarily its efficiency in the field depends, will remain an unrealizable ideal.

The proposals which, I understand, are to be submitted to Parliament by the War Office in the approaching session, are the indispensable steps towards the accomplishment of this ideal; and the nation stands towards the solution of the problem in the same relation as a railway company which, soon after opening its line, finds itself overwhelmed by an increase of traffic beyond the power of its staff and accommodation to deal with. It is advised by its experts, traffic managers, locomotive superintendent and permanent way inspectors, that an increment of its capital of five per cent. will enable a very large additional dividend to be earned, and suffice to choke off the competition threatened by powerful rival concerns; and the answer which any board of business men would assuredly give, in such a case, is identically that which Parliament should now give to the proposals now to be put before it, and for the same reasons.

It would indeed be possible, given an adequate

staff of clerks, to state in terms of money the value of the gain to be anticipated, and with nearly as much accuracy as is usually attained in estimates of probable traffic. This task it is impossible for me to attempt here; but I can briefly indicate the headings under which profit must accrue.

With an adequate establishment, decentralisation of command to the captains and subalterns can be accorded. This implies greatly increased efficiency of officers and men, together with greater contentment amongst the latter, and the evolution in each individual of those qualities of character and power of concentration which ensure subsequent success in civil life. Greater contentment in the service, together with a better prospect of employment after leaving the colours, will attract a better class of recruit, which again carries with it better money value for the capital invested in the soldier's education.

I have pointed out in the text the different conditions in our labour market to those existing in Germany; but the number of men we annually turn adrift from both services is only 27,500, and this number is not too great to be handled once we get the confidence of the employers.

Moreover, there lies open to our hands a field for employment of trained soldiers as settlers in

the colonies, which cannot be overstocked in any measurable period. The idea is not new, and was tried with great success on the disbandment of the Crimean Foreign Legion, many of whom, Germans mostly, were settled in South Africa and have done admirable service for us both in peace and war. But the old long service soldier was by his training almost ruined for a colonist's life; for only the few retained after twenty years' service either the elasticity of constitution or the individuality of character necessary to meet the vicissitudes of such an existence.

With our short service soldiers and the new system of training this is no longer the case. Individuality nowadays is encouraged, not repressed, and if the training of the infantry soldier was approximated more closely to that of the engineer recruit, he would become almost an ideal colonist, and that this is so is sufficiently proved by the great success of ex-Royal Engineers in all our colonies.

The liability for five years in the Reserve might easily be adjusted—the men would merely transfer this liability to the colonial government in which they settled; and the advantage to the Empire at large of the existence of these regularly trained soldiers in those districts which will be first to

feel the shock of war, and are the most difficult to reinforce, can hardly be overrated.

To take an extreme case, let us assume that twelve months ago we had had 20,000 trained Reserve men still under forty-five in South Africa and 100,000 in Canada, is it not evident that had war ensued we should have been in a far stronger position than we actually were, with the same number of men still of an age to do useful service idle on our hands in England?

The difficulty of depleting the Reserve would be easily met by obtaining a substitute still medically fit from the ex-Reserve, hundreds of whom would gladly accept the prolonged liability in return for the sixpence a day paid to them.

There remains yet one other point to the elucidation of which I am anxious to contribute, viz. the position of the Volunteers as affected by the authorised scheme of imperial defence.

It is evident from the concluding pages of this essay that I consider the probability of an invasion of England under existing conditions as immeasurably remote, yet, bearing in mind the recent exhibition of national hysteria which the Armenian atrocities have evoked, and the renewed danger of civil war brought about by the Report of the Irish Financial Commission, it is by no means

inconceivable that a situation might arise which would give conditions favourable enough to our possible enemies to induce them to undertake the risk.

Our extreme Naval school always assume that our enemies will view the matter through our spectacles, and that we shall always have cool, level-headed men to deal with, who will accept the opinion of their official advisers.

This is almost identically the attidude adopted by the Courts of Austria and Prussia in 1792; but the Directory were not cool, level-headed men, and instead of listening to advice they compelled their generals to attempt the impossible, and they succeeded.

Given every preparation on land completed, and the command of the Channel secured for six days, then I am confident that no foreign general, brought up almost exclusively on the Napoleonic tradition, would see anything more desperate in an attack on our shores with 200,000 men than in Napoleon's passage of the Alps in 1796 (Leoben), or his advance into the heart of Austria to the decision of Austerlitz.

For how do the probabilities appear to the foreigner, who, by the whole nature of his training, has been taught to despise our auxiliary

forces? On the one hand, the certainty of the collapse of all resistance, as a consequence of seizing the heart of the Empire; on the other, ultimate surrender, after fighting, which would not cost more than at the most some 15 per cent. of loss—for, whether on land or sea, we could not but respect the white flag; and what would such loss signify to two armies aggregating some eight million men?

Not only do I hold it wise to keep in hand this last reserve, to meet this remote possibility, but I submit that it is to this very force, whose existence has been called in question, that we owe the relatively favourable position to resist attack which we at present enjoy.

The Volunteers are, in fact, the military school of the nation; not only do they educate the men who pass through their ranks in the elementary conceptions of warfare, but they familiarise thousands of families throughout the country with the great truth, that war is still in human intercourse a stern fact which every nation is compelled to face.

It is to the impetus they have given to military and naval discussion that we owe the part now played by the press, of all political parties, in the dissemination of sound principles of imperial

defence; and but for this impetus, the nation would relapse again into the gentle slumber of pre-Crimean days.

The sum voted last year for the Volunteers amounted to 864,000*l.*—say 2 per cent. on our total naval and military expenditure. Is this too heavy a premium to pay for insuring the existence of an adequate fighting force and securing its efficiency?

F. N. MAUDE,
Capt. late R.E.

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COMPULSORY SERVICE.

INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE we can hope rightly to assess the advantages and disadvantages which may result from the adoption of any particular system of national defence, it is essential to clear the ground of many existing misconceptions, and lay down certain axioms and definitions on which to base our case.

As long as different races exist on the globe, their opposing interests must, from time to time, bring them into collision, and in the absence of any external power whose interest it is to enforce the decree of a court of arbitration, the sword remains the last appeal.

The prime necessity of every race is to exist; existence depends on the supply of food, and, amongst civilised races, food depends ultimately on markets for trade.

The world's area being limited, as population increases, the conflict for trade facilities must be keener, and the power unprepared to defend its

merchants will see its commerce taken away and its labourers go to the wall.

Ever since the final overthrow of the French at Waterloo, until within the last few years—one might almost write months—the nation has been living in a fool's paradise. Satiated with the conquests of more than a century of war, drunk with the wine of success, we lay asleep on our laurels, whilst both navy and army decayed, and our statesmen and people forgot the predominant lesson of our long struggle.

The absolute command of the sea, built up by Nelson on the foundation laid by Cromwell and Blake, has given us not only unequalled facilities for trade, together with abundant room for expansion, but has diverted attention from the conditions by which alone we continue to enjoy them.

Before the days of keen competition, whilst other nations were engaged in consolidating their internal resources, we were the only ocean carriers in the world, and trade sought the cheapest channels, as water seeks and finds the lowest level.

But of late years we have begun to encounter resistances; everywhere competitors are erecting barriers to our progress, and heading back the stream of our commerce. As the springs which feed this river are still in full activity, the pressure against these dams must increase, until ultimately the obstacle is overtopped, and the flood sweeps down, overwhelming all before it.

The struggle, in fact, is strictly analogous to the railway wars which are being waged by the great companies around us; and to bring the matter down to a business basis, it will be well to devote a few lines to the study of a particular instance.

When, fifty years ago, the London and North-Western Railway was first consolidated, it enjoyed almost unlimited dominion. The few short local lines by which it was surrounded were powerless against their great competitor, and for self-defence were compelled to amalgamate; and the time spent in discussing the details in Parliament may be accurately compared with the period of negotiation and conflict which preceded the formation of the French Republic and Germany. Then the North-Western woke up one morning to find active competitors in the field, and the railway war began: first, rate cutting, then speed, then safety, and so on; and here, for the moment, the parallel ends, for there being law in England and power to enforce it, competition must stop short of actual combat.

The traveller, as he is whirled along to his destination, sees miles of rail-track, stations, signals, rolling stock and locomotives, all representing capital, but he does not see, and rarely thinks of, the millions hidden away in invisible foundations, drainage works, &c., of which only the engineer is cognisant; or of the army of lawyers and the like who protect his interests in Parliament. Like

the merchant, he clamours for faster service and greater comfort, but strongly objects to paying increased fares, and all the time the engineer knows that he is waging a ceaseless war against cosmic forces, requiring ceaseless watchfulness, and constant expenditure, for no visible return, and as the heads of the great services have to fight Parliament for necessary funds, so has he to wrestle with his directors.

Here the analogy becomes closer again. The wars of this century are no longer—if they ever were—the outcome of petty likes or dislikes, but they are the manifestation of natural forces always searching for the line of least resistance along which to manifest themselves, and restrained only by the watchful care of the statesmen to whom the duty of observation is confided; and just as the prosperity of the railway depends on the judgment with which the directors have sanctioned outlays on works of protection, so does the credit of the nation rest on a judicious expenditure on its means of defence.

Still it is essential to bear in mind the qualification "judicious," for in either case the whole calculation is one of probabilities, and it is as easy to cripple a nation by overloading it with defensive arrangements, as to ruin a railway by providing lavishly for improbable contingencies.

The only reliable test in either case, whether expenditure has been judicious or not, will be

found in the balance sheet and the market quotation of the stock, unless indeed, the latter is controlled by speculative operators, and does not stand on its own merits.

Subject to this test, it would appear that our national expenditure has been exceedingly judicious. With Consols at 116, it must be difficult to make the business mind understand that a better use could be made of our money; but unfortunately the Consols do not stand on their own merits, and the price is largely conditioned by causes which the market cannot control.

The market for Consols is not altogether a natural one. Acts of Parliament have prescribed for banks, trusts and other corporations, investment of their reserve funds in Government securities, and for redemption of the National Debt the Government itself is compelled to limit the supply, thus assisting to produce a fictitious value.

But even eliminating these factors, which in themselves are hardly adequate to account for the present unprecedented state of our credit, there remains under the head of our national ignorance of foreign policy, and of the nature of modern war, as regarded by our possible antagonists, a cause potent enough to explain the inadequacy of the suggested test to our own conditions. We look on war from the humanitarian point of view, as a crime too terrible to contemplate, a calamity to be averted at any cost. Foreign statesmen and

politicians regard it as an "incident in human intercourse," the inevitable ultimate outcome of international competition, to be resorted to when the estimated return is worth the outlay and risks. Like directors of a public company, they are the trustees of the nation's interest, and, like them again, they take no further thought for the lives of their soldiers or employés than the expediency of the moment compels. In fact, the ethics of European chancellaries are identical with those of the Stock Exchange, expediency is the one and only ruling factor; and the reason is not far to seek, both are products of the same factor, the conflict of human interests, different forms of the universal struggle for existence, varying only in intensity.

The soldier stands to the State in the same relation as the engineer to the company. War, he regards as the engineer regards floods, subsidences and the other natural causes which threaten his permanent way, on the due maintenance of which the power of successful competition with other railways depends; and if the company refuses to listen to his reports, its credit may for a while be bolstered up by misrepresentation and playing on the ignorance of the general public, but ruin must be the ultimate consequence; and even so will it be with the nation that neglects the warnings of its military advisers.

I do not hold that our naval and military

resources, as at present existing, are inadequate to secure for us ultimate victory even against a very powerful European coalition, but they are not sufficient to prevent the possibility of attack, which is the danger we have really to guard against. The declaration of war would instantaneously paralyse the whole of our external trade and dislocate home industries. The price of provisions would be run up by speculators 200 to 500 per cent., hundreds of thousands of workmen would be thrown out of employ, tens of thousands of incomes reduced; and, whatever might be the final outcome of the struggle, that would not bring back the dead to life, or restore the happiness of the ruined millions.

To avert this suffering, seems to me the first purpose of our armed forces, not to entice our possible enemies by an exhibition of weakness—which does not, at any rate at this moment, really exist—to attack us, but to stand so fully organised before the world, that our strength may impose respect, and thus constrain the maintenance of the existing peace.

The point for us, therefore, now to consider is, whether, under existing conditions, a fundamental change in the method of recruiting our services, is called for or not. There is a wide-spread opinion abroad that some such alteration is called for, and many, attracted by the astounding object lesson Germany affords, of the value of compul-

sory service, are beginning to think that in that way too, our own salvation lies; but hitherto the subject has received only superficial attention, and the true causes which have led to the high measure of success which has been attained in that country, and particularly their relation to the special conditions of our own existence, have not been generally grasped.

In the following pages I shall endeavour to analyse the relation of cause to effect under German conditions; then the working of the same principles under the conditions obtaining in France; and finally, between these two limits, to approximate to our own position under the special circumstances of our own environment. The result will be no absolute conclusion holding good for all time, but it will be relatively correct, and remain so for as long as the conditions remain unaltered.

GERMANY.

It was a frequent saying of Prince Bismarck's, previous to the events of 1870, that "Germany had never recovered from the effects of the Thirty Years' War," and one needs to be absolutely penetrated by the truth of this saying before one can correctly estimate the enormous influence for good the introduction of compulsory service (without substitutes) has exercised on the evolution of this nation.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Germany, in spite of the absence of all unity of direction, was nevertheless far advanced on the road of material prosperity; had it not been so she could not have stood the drain of war, as it was then conducted, for one-half the number of years during which she actually endured it, for absolute exhaustion alone put an end to the struggle. Labour, capital and time are needed to recover from such devastation, and practically none of these were forthcoming. Her fields lay untilled, her towns untenanted, and when, at length, the usual courses of nature were accumulating the capital so urgently needed, the scourge of war was again upon her, and for 120 years her

richest provinces were again and again laid bare by the incursions of plundering armies. Finally, in 1815, she emerged, victorious, but crippled. National credit she possessed none, for, during the last few years of the great struggle for liberty, she had been practically dependent on British subsidies; but the country was potentially as rich as ever, and Frederic the Great had demonstrated what wise administration could effect in even the poorest provinces. Stein had organised the conditions of land tenure throughout the empire, and Scharnhorst had laid the foundations of the present system of national defence. In the subsequent decades, from 1815, the national credit began to rise—very slowly for the first forty years, following every fluctuation in the confidence of the people, due to internal disturbances or dread of foreign complications, and then mounting with a bound when the events of 1866 and 1870 laid once and for all the nightmare of foreign invasion—until within the last few years it has been possible to effect successive conversions of the national debt, so that at present the rate of interest is only $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and their price is a fraction above par. And now we come to the prime causes which have combined to produce this extraordinary result.

In the early days of western evolution, feudalism was everywhere the fundamental law of the land. In each successive gradation, from the king

down to the yeoman, each held his land on the condition of personal service to his immediate feudal superior. If property has its duties—a favourite point in the late Mr. Froude's invaluable histories—tenancy has its duties equally, a fact he, in common with our land reformers, frequently forgot, or, to be fair to his memory, he never sufficiently accentuated; but the idea was in advance of the conditions prevailing at the moment, and, in the absence of adequate means of communication, or, perhaps it would be better to put it, in the absence of sufficient incentive to establish such means of communication, such as the want of an overpowering sense of external danger, local interests became dominant, and the history of all nations, our own especially, shows only internal dissension and resistance to the feudal chief.

Wherever external danger overpowered all other interests, as in the last years of the Roman Empire, on the marches of North Britain, or against the Turks in Austria—to take instances very far apart in point of time—the resources of civilisation proved by no means inadequate to the occasion: beacon fires, fiery cross runners, relays of horses, spread the news as rapidly as the need required, and all petty feuds were sunk in presence of the external foe; but, in proportion as the frontier guards proved most effective, barons fought against the king, and the latter in self-defence was

compelled to employ mercenary troops to safeguard his interests; and these being highly specialised tradesmen—for fighting in those days, when war was chronic, not occasional, was a trade—soon overpowered their less specialised antagonists of the feudal levy, and became the nucleus round which the standing armies of the eighteenth century aggregated.

The old feudal idea of universal liability to military service, as expressed in our own law of ballot for the militia, which is only held over from year to year by the annual passage of the Army Act through Parliament, still remained in arrested existence in all countries, and was occasionally called into local activity during the eighteenth century, both by Louis XIV. and Frederic the Great; but in general it was considered more in accordance with the views of political economy which prevailed at the time, to pay for enlisted foreign mercenaries, who were not only less likely to desert individually or mutiny collectively, but whose presence in the ranks set free the people of the country to the development of its own resources.

The armies thus raised by enlistment were the personal property of the king who paid them; they were in no sense national armies, for the idea of nationality, as we now understand it, hardly existed, at any rate across the channel.

Protestants hated Catholics, and *vice versa*, and

both, as civilians, hated the soldiers with whom they might be brought in contact, for there was little to choose between the exactions of either, and both were equally dangerous to the peace of quiet home life. Moreover, the great religious question having been buried, and the armies being exceedingly expensive to maintain in idleness, it was a wise economy to save their keep by transferring their maintenance on neighbouring countries, particularly since there was always the prospect of settling outstanding claims against a brother potentate, and acquiring additional real estate valuable for its rent roll only. This point requires to be insisted on, for it characterises so markedly the difference between the guiding motives of our own and continental policy. We fought consistently for trade and markets; they, when not in conflict directly with us, for increment of taxable area; and the reason is not difficult to perceive when we recall that the foreign sovereigns were absolute landed proprietors, and the British primarily the executive agents of the national will.

Since the troops had to be maintained whether in peace or war—and from motives of economy it was cheaper to keep them during war—there was no great incentive to the kings or cabinets concerned to bring the matter to a speedy decision, hence, as a rule, neither side endeavoured to put forth from the first its full fighting power.* The

* Clausewitz, 'Vom Kriege.'

usual course was for the king or cabinet to put up the proposed campaign to be tendered for by the generals in favour at the moment—the lowest being almost invariably accepted—and then when the general took the field, in his letters of instructions he generally found a special exhortation to economise the lives of the king's brave soldiers.* Of course, now and again, a resolute leader, once free to make use of his own resources, would take the bit in his teeth and force the fighting, but even this was rarer than might be supposed, for the leader having been appointed to troops which he had not trained, into which he had not infused his own spirit, rarely ventured to call on them for any exertion out of the common, as he could not predict how they would respond to his appeal.

Out of this condition of things there arose a school of strategical thought which exercised for many years a most disastrous result in all countries, and which indeed precipitated the downfall of the standing army system, and compelled recourse to compulsory service. It is necessary to bring this out clearly, for otherwise it is not very obvious why the old-fashioned system—which we alone retain, and which lay in the direction of specialisation, i.e. in the normal order of evolution—should ever have been given up; it is not in effect clear at first sight

* 'Prussian Official History of the First Silesian War,' chap. i.

why, the conditions of armament, communication, and transmission of intelligence, remaining very much the same, it should have been found necessary to substitute for the small highly efficient body of specialists, more numerous and less efficient armies serving under the hateful idea of compulsion instead of by free will. It appears a case of reversion, a step in a backward direction—actually, it will be shown to be a case of readaptation in one particular fraction of the community to meet the needs of changed conditions in the remainder. Armies being everywhere in those days substantially equal in quality of men, armament, &c., and alike in the absence of any particular motive to seek a rapid decision at any cost, there remained only one factor which could decide between them, viz. the relative skill of the rival commanders in the art of manœuvre as opposed to battle leading. Troops were consequently treated as chess men, and the game of war was contemplated as a glorified game of chess; rules were deduced for its conduct, and the skill of the leader estimated by the degree with which he adhered to them, and moreover, as long as he stuck to the accepted interpretation of the rules, his responsibility in case of failure was minimised.

The fact that Frederic the Great simply brushed aside all these conventional combinations of his adversaries signified little, for he was responsible to himself alone for success or failure,

and enjoyed over all other generals of the period the advantage of forging his own tools for his purposes, and infusing his spirit into each of them.

How little the true spirit of his conduct of war was apparent to his own contemporaries is evident from the following quotation from a speech by Massenbach, a few years before Jena, which was meant and received as the highest possible testimony to the military ability of Prince Henry, the king's brother: "Durch kühne Märsche schmeichelte er dem Glück, glücklicher als Cæsar bei Dyrrhachium, gröszer als Condé bei Rocroi, gleich dem unsterblichen Berwick, erfocht er ohne Schlacht den Sieg."* This sounds strange to our modern ears, but it was men, saturated with this misconception of the true nature of war, who confronted the masterly purposefulness of the French revolutionary armies, and ultimately went down before the all-compelling genius of Napoleon.

There are yet two other causes which contributed to the downfall of the old armies that require to be cleared up before the ground is levelled for our future structure, and though they obtained principally in Prussia, yet to a lesser degree they were present universally.

Life in the armies of those days was cruelly severe—inadequately clothed (the Prussian infan-

* Von der Goltz, 'Das Volk in Waffen,' p. 305, 1st edition, 1883.

try had no overcoats prior to Jena),* insufficiently fed and absolutely idle, the sternest discipline was necessary to keep the heterogeneous mass of foreigners and adventurers in order. Desertion therefore, whether in peace or war, was constant. To check it, the aid of the civil population was called in, and in Prussia every citizen had the right to call on any soldier found walking more than a mile from camp to produce his pass, and if not forthcoming to arrest him: it may be imagined to what strained relations the frequent exercise of this power gave rise. Moreover, the civilian hated the soldier, whose usefulness, since wars were made for dynastic, not national reasons, he utterly failed to understand; and, as time went on, the furloughed soldier, even the trained soldier still with the colours,† began to compete with the civilian in the labour market, and, thanks to his pay, clothing, &c., supplied by the State, was able to underbid him.

Into this unwholesome and fermenting mass of humanity, there entered the germs of the French revolutionary mania, with consequences which may be imagined.

To men saturated with the views of Rousseau's Contrat Social the soldier appeared as an outlaw, as the meanest of ignoble slaves—one who had sold his own freedom to prevent others enjoying

* See Von der Goltz, 'Roszbach und Jena.'

† Die Freiwächter.

theirs; and the fact that the young women refused to look at matters in this light, only served to intensify their rage.

This placed the king in a most troublesome dilemma; to develop the resources of his estate, he had to keep the tenants contented by the punishment of all disorder. He could not prevent the citizens insulting the soldiers, but when the soldiers retaliated, he could and did punish them severely; and thus gradually, helped by the national reaction throughout the country against the unrestrained horrors of actual warfare, there grew up an exaggerated respect for private property, as great as exists at present in our own country.

An instance which illustrates most strikingly the length to which this evil had grown, is told by Scharnhorst in his pamphlet, 'The causes which led to the defeats of the Allies in the Netherlands, 1792–3.'

On the glacis of the little fortress of Menin there was a mill, whose existence seriously impeded the fire of the defences. When it became evident that the place must be prepared to resist an attack, the commandant proposed to pull the mill down, but was stopped by the action of the civil authorities. The matter was referred to Berlin, and for two years an animated correspondence continued. When at length a decision had been come to the town had been besieged and taken, and the cover afforded by the mill had

proved one of the chief factors which brought about its fall.

As long as Frederic the Great was still alive, his marvellous administrative industry and sound common sense prevented the occurrence of such extreme absurdities; but after his death, the idea that private rights outweighed considerations of national security spread very rapidly, and culminated in the year of catastrophe, 1806. Of the many causes which led to the downfall of the old army this was by no means the least important—a lesson it is well to bear in mind. The arguments of the opponents of the Manœuvre Bill last session were merely unconscious repetitions of Prussian, pre-Jena, public opinion.

Lastly, comes the inherent evil of all long service systems in time of peace, for which no cure, short of a radical change in human nature, can be devised.

The organisation of all armies, until within the present century, had evolved itself through ages of chronic warfare ; the sphere of influence of each rank and its numbers had adapted itself, on the survival of the fittest principle, to the average capacity of the average man under normal conditions. But when a state of war is exchanged for one of peace the conditions cease to be normal; the work for which ten captains and thirty subalterns barely suffice on the line of march before the enemy, can be undertaken by

a couple of men with comparative ease in permanent cantonments, and the natural consequences follow—the most energetic men absorb all the power into their own hands, and the remainder enjoy their opportunities for idleness.

The longer the term of service, the less drill required to keep up the outward show of efficiency, and the fewer the number of recruits who annually join; hence the less opportunity for young officers to master the details of their profession. As the generation of war-trained veterans passes away, their places are taken by men of whom the bulk must necessarily be relatively ignorant of the details of their profession. Naturally the army no longer works as smoothly as before, and the administration is compelled to interfere; and thus ultimately, since the scope of regulations must be adapted to the capacity of the weakest intellects, it becomes necessary to prescribe the minutest details, and to exact the most literal obedience, in order to ensure any performance at all. But the evil does not cease here. In an idle society, anything which saves trouble is eagerly welcome, and since these regulations save men the trouble of thinking and acting for themselves, they soon become accepted by the majority as inspired revelation and worshipped accordingly. The end is lost sight of for the means, and the higher the sense of duty in all ranks the greater the degradation of the individuals.

Given perfect leaders, and the value of unhesitating blind obedience becomes inestimable; but when the system of an army practically precludes the evolution of such leaders, an absolute rabble may prove superior, if time enough be granted to it, as the history of the French Revolution abundantly proves.

THE FRENCH ARMY, 1780–1806.

In the main, the conditions above sketched out applied equally to the French army. Now and again Louis XIV. raised contingents of from 25,000 to 30,000 men under the old feudal law, but it appears never to have occurred to any ruler to base his whole military system on this annual tax on the youth of the country; and it is necessary to insist on this point, for it was only the slight alteration in principle here involved, and first accepted in Jourdan's plan of compulsory conscription passed into law in 1798, which rendered possible to Napoleon the boundless schemes of conquest and annexation in which he subsequently indulged.

According to an Army List of 1752, out of 160,000 men on the establishments of the active army, 44,000 were foreigners—Germans, Swiss, Italians—with only some 4500 Irish; and at the outbreak of the Revolution the proportion appears to have been the same.*

If respect for private property never attained the same pitch as in Germany, the power of court

* Max Jähns, 'Das Französische Heer,' Leipzig, 1873; far the most complete work on the French army with which I am acquainted.

intrigue was many times greater, and as a consequence no single one of its generals ever had the chance of training his own men and infusing his own spirit into them; hence none dared to call on his troops for a supreme exertion, because he could never feel that same confidence in their endurance that naturally belongs to the leader who has trained his own instruments.

Hence, because the troops did not know their leader, and the leader did not know his troops, the best energies of both were paralysed.

The tactical principles in vogue during the years immediately preceding the outbreak, were, on paper, identical with those of the Prussians; indeed, the Infantry Regulations were a translation of the Prussian drill-book,* and remained nominally in force until after 1815; but there existed in the army a tactical schism, and many favoured the doctrine of Menil Durant, who preached skirmishers and small columns, in favour of which the experiences of wood fighting in Canada and America were largely adduced.

Notwithstanding the outward fripperies of form which so intensely disgusted young Thiebault on his return from Berlin,† when the test came the spirit of the army proved to be admirable.

* Lettow Vorbeck's 'Krieg von 1806–7,' vol. i. p. 80; also Jähn's 'Geschichte der Kriegs-Wissenschaften.'

† Thiebault's 'Mémoirs,' vol. i. p. 78:—"Je n'ai jamais oublié Valenciennes, où nous arrivâmes à l'heure de la parade,

With the leaders deserting their posts, with party strife raging round them, under the most terrible strain—the risk of secret denunciation—which the mind of man can be called on to endure, the average soldier did his duty loyally, without flinching from his post. The army proved the sheet-anchor of French regeneration, forming the nucleus round which the party of order aggregated, and the nursery of the men and leaders who re-conquered her independence; and the foreigners proved by no means the weakest link in the chain of evolution.

No chapters in military history deserve the attention of both soldiers and civilians more than those in which M. d'Hauterive* has presented the record of this most tragic period. To the soldier they point out clearly the path of duty, and to the civilian who reads without prejudice they must bring home the conviction that, in time of civil strife, an organised army

et où je vis, pour la première fois de ma vie, des officiers coiffés en ailes de pigeon, montés sur des patins pour ne pas se crotter et ayant des parapluies, parce qu'il pleuvait un peu. Qu'on juge de mon étonnement, de mon scandale en comparant ce spectacle à celui auquel m'avait accoutumé l'armée prussienne, si sévère dans sa tenue, si militaire dans ses moindres détails. J'étais indigné, humilié, et plus j'éprouvais déjà le besoin d'aimer et d'estimer tout ce qui était français, plus je rougissais de l'idée que les étrangers, les Prussiens surtout, ne pourraient s'empêcher de rire de pitié à un tel spectacle."

* 'L'Armée sous la Révolution.' Paris, 1895.

remains the one guarantee of liberty and personal freedom.

The earliest armies of the Revolution were volunteers,* who aggregated about the *cadres* of the royal army; for though local corps with fancy names were freely furnished, these usually broke at the first shot fired, and the *débris* were absorbed into the old fighting regiments, which maintained something of their traditions, though they changed their titles.

Their earliest efforts were very contemptible—modern French military writers freely admit it,† even if our own or Prussian contemporary records are rejected as biased; but the old soldiers of the royal army knew what discipline was, and were

* Volunteers were originally called for, but when these failed to appear in sufficient numbers, men were drawn in by force without any pretence at legality whatever, but they mostly deserted on their way to the front, and those who remained may fairly be assumed to have done so of their own free will. To what dimensions desertion rose will be shown by the following letter from La Coste to the Convention, dated Nancy, 31 August, 1792, and quoted by Rousset. (See Max Jähn's 'Das Französische Heer,' p. 54.) "Plus de 140,000 citoyens armés, disposés en bataillons, formant plusieurs compagnies de cavalerie, des grenadiers et des canonniers avec des canons, sont en marche pour se rendre à Wissembourg," &c.; but nothing was heard of their arrival until, on the 10th September, the adjutant-general of the Rhine army writes, reporting the arrival of 1200 agriculturists with many weapons, but no soldiers. This was all that arrived out of the great column.

† Rousset, 'Les Volontaires de 1791–4.'

prompt to enforce it, and the "survival of the fittest" process again asserted itself. The upper middle classes, unhampered by aristocratic titles or connections, and endowed with strong constitutions, the consequence of better food and more comfortable surroundings, soon came to the front, and the original agitators were eliminated. So that even before Napoleon's ascension into power, the fighting strength of the nation, its able-bodied manhood, had learnt again, in the sternest school of reality, the fundamental absurdity contained in the revolutionary formula.

But this method of training by natural selection was exceedingly extravagant in human life,* and hardly had the Terror come to an end, and with it the chief inducement to voluntary enlistment, viz. free rations and comparative security from the guillotine, than the want of men became exceedingly apparent, and various suggestions were put forward to relieve it. Nothing practical however was accomplished until, in 1798, Jourdan brought forward his plan of compulsory conscription before the Council of the Five Hundred, according to which the annual contingent was to be chosen by ballot from all Frenchmen between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, with a scale of exemption very similar to those now almost universally admitted, and the additional alleviation

* Thiebault, vol. i.

of the right of substitution. The bill became law, after a somewhat protracted debate, and in principle remained in force until 1870, its provisions being intensified or alleviated from time to time as circumstances dictated.*

For the first few years the annual contingent fluctuated between sixty to eighty thousand, and was borne without serious complaint—anything was a relief after the misery of the Terror—and the nation had not yet learnt what sacrifices would be demanded of it under the Empire.

It was the retreat from Naples, and then the siege of Genoa, which first brought home to all classes the suffering the pursuit of conquest really entailed. The exact number of lives lost in the Italian peninsula seems never to have been established; it cannot have been less than 50,000, and if we add to this the 40,000 left by Napoleon in Egypt, and the drain of men constantly going on in La Vendée, it is evident that the strain must have been beginning to tell.

Nevertheless, the army itself remained as yet unaffected, the drafts of conscripts still marched in blissful ignorance of the future before them, and, joining their regiments in comparatively

* See an analysis of the "Code de la Conscription" which appeared in the 'Edinburgh Review' in 1809; also Max Jähns, quoted above; and an article in the 'M. Wochenblatt,' entitled "Les Réfractaires," Supplement, 1890.

small instalments, were readily absorbed and licked into shape by their comrades; and on the battle-field, at any rate, the army showed no sign of deterioration.

Friedland and Eylau mark the culminating point of French fighting efficiency.

THE CRISIS OF JENA.

THE morning of the 14th October, 1806, not only witnessed the overthrow of the old Frederician army, but its consequences set in motion a number of causes which have not, even now, ninety years after, fully exhausted their vitality; in fact, a very slight variation in any one of the many factors whose product decided the day, would have sufficed to completely change the course of history, but whether with any permanent advantage to humanity in general, the readers of this essay may decide for themselves.

It is generally believed in England, owing to our one-sided study of military history, and our adherence to the strategic theories of the eighteenth century, that the fate of the Prussians was sealed even before actual tactical collision, but modern German investigation has long since established that this was not the case.

Napoleon's own correspondence conclusively shows that, in this instance, the information at his disposal was far too vague and inaccurate for him to base thereon any plan of campaign in the usual acceptation of the term, or to predict the result of his movements for more than twenty-four hours in advance.

The actual forces set in motion on both sides were not very unequal, 220,000 to 180,000; and even though the Duke of Brunswick's adherence to the old-fashioned theory of an army of reserve robbed him of 18,000 men, still, on the 13th of October, and even on the morning of the 14th, he retained many chances in his favour of upsetting the premature boast contained in Napoleon's bombastic proclamation to his army.

Whilst the Prussians spent the night shivering, without overcoats, in their tents, and starving for lack of food and fuel, which lay everywhere around them, but might not be touched without orders from the Kriegs-Commissär in Weimar—no less a personage than the poet Goethe—Napoleon was busy piling up men on the narrow plateau of the Landgrafenberg, till, before morning, some 30,000 stood so densely packed that all movement except to the front was impossible, and had it not been for the accident of the fog on the morning of the 14th, disaster must have been inevitable; a few batteries and half a dozen battalions would have sufficed to ensure their extermination, but this opportunity was hidden from Prince Hohenlohe's eyes, and owing to the same cause, his battalions, when they moved off to attack, soon after 6 a.m., lost their direction and uncovered their flanks. The end of it we all know; but had it not been for that fateful fog we might never have heard of "*die allgemeine Wehrpflicht*," for the main body of the army under

the Duke of Brunswick was by no means so unfortunate. Though late at the defile of Kosen, it was still in time to make a good fight of it, and, until the commander-in-chief fell with a bullet through both eyes, had every chance in its favour. Then the fundamental weakness of all long service peace-trained armies showed itself, and Kalkreuth, like Lord Cardigan at Balaclava,* stood by with his whole reserve of 18 battalions—refusing to move, because he had received no orders from his hierarchical chief, who, lying on the ground in agony, was in no condition to give any.†

The army retreated in fair order, northward by the Eckardtsberg on Prenzlau; but ultimately the strain on them induced by hunger and privation, again only due to the exaggerated respect for private property, proved too severe, and the remnants capitulated, practically unconditionally.

No class in any nation in history has ever so covered itself with eternal infamy as the citizens and countrymen of Prussia; not content with overwhelming their generals and officers with contumely, they turned away their own sick and wounded from their doors, and went out to meet the invaders with more than oriental obsequious-

* During the charge of the Heavy Brigade. See Kingslake's 'Crimea.'

† See Lehmann's 'Life of Scharnhorst'; also Höpfner's 'Krieg von 1806–7'; Lettow Vorbeck's 'Krieg 1806–7'; Prince Hohenlohe's 'Briefe über Strategie'; Graf York von Wartenburg's 'Napoleon als Feldherr.'

ness. The people of Berlin were no whit behind their fellows; the press of the period welcomed the French with effusion, and congratulated themselves and their readers on the happy chance that had brought the brave defenders of the rights of man—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—to rule over them.*

But within a few weeks their song changed. Where the Prussians had not dared to take a faggot of firewood without authority and payment, the French took what they pleased, and destroyed what they did not require, without any payment at all. This was the Reformers' chance, and they struck while the iron was still hot.

They determined to show that the spirit of the army was still sound, and that it could be relied on to sit in judgment on itself. For this purpose courts of honour were established in every regiment, and every officer, of whatever rank, who had surrendered a fortress, been present at a capitulation, &c., was compelled to clear himself before them, and those who failed to do so were brought before courts-martial, and by them condemned to serious terms of imprisonment, in some cases (seven in all) to death. The officers who could do this were in earnest, and the country soon felt it could trust them. With steps for the reorganisation at first we have no space to deal, but, against

* Von der Goltz, 'Roszbach und Jena,' appendix, extracts from daily papers.

unequalled opposition, Scharnhorst at last obtained recognition for the principle of universal service without substitutes, and at the same time procured the removal of all dishonouring punishments, such as running the gauntlet or the liability to be beaten with the "Fuchtel" at the discretion of the company officers—sometimes even of the sergeants and drill-instructors. In theory, though perhaps not altogether in practice, the Prussian soldier might no longer be subjected to personal chastisement of any description.*

One must have lived and been brought up with men, the descendants of the soldiers of the War of Liberation, to realise the full force of the spirit which moved them. The original indifference on the part of the civilians to the war, as being an affair in which only the combatants were concerned, had been utterly crushed out of them by the tyranny of the French during the years of occupation, and then, too, their desperate situation, apparently with no hope of salvation, could only be met by exceptional measures. In such times of trouble, all the nonsense of humanitarian sentimentalists is knocked on the head, and each individual of the nation recognises in his own person his absolute duty to fight for his country. In such times it becomes possible for really great men to touch the hearts of the people, by appeals to their honour and patriotism, which, under ordinary

* Lehmann's 'Scharnhorst.'

circumstances, would be considered by the average civilian—nay, even by many soldiers—as "high falutin'."

The Reformers stopped at nothing to raise the tone of the people. Poets, writers, even the church and clergy, were enlisted on their side. It was laid down that, in the coming war, the names of all those who distinguished themselves before the enemy were to be solemnly announced to the congregation from the pulpit, and their deeds recorded in letters of gold on a tablet to be erected in the church. To those who received the medal for distinguished service special precedence in the church was to be given, and for those who fell before the enemy special prayers were to be offered up. Those who can identify themselves with the feelings of the lower classes, and particularly with those of the agricultural section of a nation possessing naturally deeply religious convictions, can easily understand of what far-reaching importance these changes soon proved to be, and much in the character of the present German soldier, otherwise difficult to understand, will become readily apparent to them.

It is not necessary to do more than refer to the method by which Napoleon's treaty, forbidding the maintenance of more than 40,000 men, was defeated. Men were called up and dismissed again as soon as they had received the merest rudiments of a military training, such as elementary instruction in the use of their arms, an acquaintance with

the forms of skirmishing fighting, and the elementary drill of the company and battalion. The bulk of the troops who fought at Grosz Gorchen, Bautzen and Leipzig, had scarcely more than a month's training, yet the French, more especially Napoleon, was quick to notice that it was no longer the old wooden troops of Jena to which they were opposed. The survivors of the succeeding year's fighting, were old war-seasoned troops, and of the best; but there were terribly few of them, and the army which fought by our side in the campaign of Waterloo, were still, for the most part, men with even less training than our average militia regiments nowadays. But what they lacked in drill discipline, they made up in *moral*. All the feelings, so skilfully worked on by the Reformers, were at flashing point; and though at Ligny and Planchenoit their actual losses did not equal those so stoically borne by the old army at Jena, yet, considering that the fighting was almost purely individual in the defence of houses, and long-continued struggles between skirmisher swarms, their conduct was deserving of the highest praise. The French, according to Charras, were amazed by it; the oldest and most war-beaten veterans confessed that never in their experience had they encountered such a determined and individually desperate foe, and that the slaughter in the streets of Ligny and St. Amand was more ghastly than anything they had previously witnessed.

DECAY OF THE FRENCH ARMY.

WHILST the Prussians were thus daily gaining strength for the great decision which lay before them, the tide had begun to turn with the French.

The laxity of discipline on the march—of which already, in 1805, we have abundant testimony from Thiébault (vols. i. and ii.) and Fezensac, to say nothing of the scattered indications occurring in the memoirs and letters of German and Austrian officers—together with the corruption in the intendance, led to appalling loss amongst the reinforcements on their way to the front; and when, in the winter of 1806–7, unfavourable climatic conditions alternately turned the plains of Poland and East Prussia into seas of mud or wastes of snow, the drain of men became more than even the resources of conscription, though worked with the most relentless severity, could supply.

The nation now began to realise all that service in the Grand Army implied, and every expedient was resorted to to shirk obedience to the law. This led to the enactment of fresh clauses of increased stringency, punishing not only the guilty individual, but his parents and the Commune as well, whilst the authorities also were rendered

liable to the most crushing penalties for the slightest failure to enforce it or even to show leniency.

Nevertheless the number of deserters, "*Réfractaires*" as they were called, continued to increase, and by 1811 things had reached to such a pitch that over 60,000 of these were at large, and were being hunted down as outlaws by no less than 16 flying columns, numbering in all some 40,000, all of them trained and picked troops.

Already, towards the end of 1807, the strain was becoming intolerable, but then for the moment the extension of the system of conscription to the foreign countries in French occupation supplied a fresh reservoir, which for a time met the demands created by the occupation of the Spanish Peninsula and the renewal of the war with Austria.*

"L'Armée de l'Allemagne" marched against the Austrians in 1809 some 250,000 strong, but it contained only two corps, the 2nd and 3rd, essentially recruited from the left bank of the Rhine; of the others, the 4th contained French, Hessian, Badener, and Nassau regiments; the 7th was exclusively Bavarian; the 8th, "Würtembergers"; the 9th, Saxons; and the 10th, Westphalians, Dutch and Frenchmen. Eighty-five thousand of these belonged to purely German commands, but how many other nationalities were

* Max Jähns.

represented in the ranks of the French units it is impossible to disentangle, probably 40 per cent., and the composition of the forces engaged simultaneously in Spain and Italy was even less homogeneous.

The peace of Vienna, after Wagram, extended the rayon of conscription still further. The Croat regiments, six in number, stationed on the frontiers of Illyria, were turned into "Chasseurs Illyriens," and Albanian and Greek formations put on foot. The whole of Germany east of the Weser and Elbe —containing a million inhabitants—was also incorporated as the 32nd Military Division, and assessed at three infantry and one cavalry regiment. Since Tilsit, also, Poland had had to contribute some 30,000 men.

On the 13th March, 1812, in anticipation of the coming expedition into Russia, a bill organising the National Guard of France into three classes was passed. The first class comprised everyone capable of bearing arms between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, who had hitherto escaped service in the regular army, and the men thus obtained were formed into 88 "Cohorts," each of six companies of 140 men, with one depôt and one artillery company. The second class took in all over twenty-five and under forty, and the third the remainder, from forty to sixty. It was from these formations that the bulk of the army that fought in 1813–14 was subsequently drawn, and

this accounts for the marvellous rapidity with which the losses of the retreat from Moscow were repaired. The Grand Army itself was made up in the following manner :—

The Guard, 54 battalions, 35 squadrons, = 47,000 men; and, though essentially French, contained men of all nationalities. One division, "Claparède," was exclusively Polish.

The 1st Corps, Davoust, 88 battalions, 16 squadrons, = 72,000. French, together with Spaniards, Poles, Badeners, Mecklenburgers and Hessians.

The 2nd Corps, Oudinot, 51 battalions, 20 squadrons, = 37,000. French, also Portuguese, Illyrians, Swiss (3 regiments), Dutch and Poles.

The 3rd Corps, Ney, 48 battalions, 24 squadrons, = 40,000. 1 division Wurtembergers; 2 divisions French, with 3 foreign regiments.

The 4th Corps, Beauharnais, 57 battalions, 24 squadrons, = 42,000. Italians, 4 French, and 1 Spanish regiment, with Croats, Illyrians, and 4 Bavarian light cavalry regiments.

These four corps, it must be remembered, were essentially the "French Army," and yet out of the whole 244 battalions, 156 only were "French," and in their ranks were included a large number of Germans from the left bank of the Rhine.

Of the remainder—

The 5th Corps, Poniatowski, 44 battalions, 20 squadrons, = 36,000. Poles.

The 6th Corps, Gouvion St. Cyr, 28 battalions, = 28,000 men. Bavarians.

The 7th Corps, Regnier, 18 battalions, 16 squadrons, = 19,000. Saxons.

The 8th Corps, Vandamme, 16 battalions, 12 squadrons, = 19,000. Westphalians.

The 10th Corps, Macdonald, 36 battalions, 16 squadrons, = 32,000. Prussians.

The 12th Corps, Schwarzenberg, 27 battalions, 54 squadrons, = 34,000. Austrians.

The Reserve Cavalry was equally heterogeneous.

These corps, together 467,000 strong (including gunners and train), formed the original field army, and included no less than 280,000 foreigners, i.e. fourteen foreigners to nine Frenchmen; and later on they were followed by the 9th Corps, Victor, 54 battalions, 16 squadrons, = 31,000 men, consisting of one French, one German and one Polish division, and the 11th Corps, Augereau, 26,000 men, of which 22,000 were Germans.

Altogether 619,000 men were concerned in the campaign, of which only 239,000 were Frenchmen; and at the same time there were 300,000 engaged in Spain, 50,000 in Italy, and 150,000 in France (40,000 of whom were engaged in beating up the "Réfractaires"): in all a grand total of 1,120,000 men under Napoleon's command.

The steps taken, after the retreat from Moscow, for the creation of the army of 1813, deserve

the closest and most detailed study on the part of all who wish to realise what can be done by a great man at bay, even under the most untoward circumstances.

On the 1st of February 1813, Prince Eugene, the Viceroy of Italy, writing from Posen (in reply to Napoleon's letter of the 27th January, asking for full returns as to the condition of the Grand Army), could only report the presence with the colours of 1600 men of the 1st Corps, 1900 of the 2nd, 1000 of the 3rd, and 1900 of the 4th, total 6400—all that was left of the 125,000 French infantry who had crossed the Niemen; and these, reinforced by the 16,000 of Grenier's corps, the garrison of Berlin, formed the nucleus of the future "Grand Army of 1813." From Paris the Emperor himself immediately ordered the conversion of the 88 Cohorts of the National Guard—raised the preceding year under the express stipulation that they were not to serve beyond the frontier—into troops of the line, and despatched them to the front forthwith. Next, by the most unsparing use of the powers the conscription gave him, he placed under arms by the beginning of March 170,000 men, and by the end of April brought the total up to 600,000.

Three hundred thousand of these were sent off to Germany, but barely half appear to have reached the front, the remainder either deserting or dying in hospital on the road; for, though

large reinforcements continued throughout the summer to be despatched, on the 15th of August the army, which had reached the formidable total of 550,000 on paper (90,000 in hospital), contained only 180,000 Frenchmen, the balance being made up of Germans, Spaniards, Italians, &c., as in 1812.

If we remember that at the same time the war in Spain was raging, Italy and the coast line required to be watched, and the interior of France itself forcibly held in subjection; whilst, further, Napoleon had no trained General Staff, in the modern acceptation of the word, to assist him; and that the administrative departments were corrupt to the last degree; the astounding organising ability of the one man, who managed to create order out of such chaos, and with such materials make head for months against the allied forces of all Europe, in days when slowness of communication and distribution intensified many times the difficulty of the task, stands out with the most startling brilliancy; and one is compelled to ask what might he not have achieved had he only been honestly supported.

Slowness of communication, of course, was common to all the armies of the time, but the results were localised for the Allies within each kingdom, and they were held up by an intensity of national passion for revenge, which, for the time at least, practically put a stop to internal

corruption, though, unfortunately, it did not suffice to paralyse the international jealousies of the leaders; and it was these jealousies, and not the strategic ability of Napoleon, which enabled him to protract the struggle through the early months of 1814.

The peace of 1814 set free not only the French garrisons, which had been isolated all over Germany, but also enormous numbers of prisoners of war, hence there was no lack of material on which to draw for the army of Waterloo; but the spirit of the nation was crushed, the conscription could no longer be enforced with the old relentless severity, and, practically speaking, only those responded to its call who had their hearts in the work, and only required the pressure of the law to induce them to come forward—and this goodwill to the work in hand is the chief explanation of the excellent fighting spirit the French troops actually did display during the last hours of the great struggle—practically speaking, we were fighting volunteers, not pressed men.

AFTER THE WAR—GERMANY.

When, at the conclusion of their ten years' purgatory, the Prussian troops marched back to their old quarters, they found a new country before them. The king's uniform, before Jena a badge of disgrace, had now become an honour and distinction to its wearer. So many thousands had passed through the mill that every family had some of its members in the ranks. The walls of caste had been broken, and though the actual terms of the Prussian law were in principle almost as severe as they had been in France, and as regards passes very little less irksome than in Frederic's time, because the barriers between the army and the nation had disappeared, not the slightest friction resulted from their existence.

After the war there followed a period of extreme reaction. Every one felt that their services were never likely to be called upon, and since Stein's abolition of the last vestiges of feudal tenure (on paper) had removed the chief block of offence between the landed Adel and their tenants, and also since the French exactions had left them all in one common poverty, the two chief classes of the nation settled down amicably, and the best of good feel-

ing prevailed. The young recruits were the sons of the men who had fought by their company commander's side, and the captain became the *Compagnie Vater* in fact, as he had already been in name. No one was harassed by inspections, though inspections were still held, and the army drowsed off into a gentle slumber which did not cease until the surrender of Olmütz shook them out of their dreams.

But all the time the system of short service was working out its influence, and under particularly favourable circumstances. Men of every rank and degree of intelligence falling in side by side in the ranks (for the Einjährige are drilled the same as the other recruits), and in numbers beyond the power of a single drill sergeant to supervise, instruction had to be entrusted to the officers, and these were compelled to understand their work intelligently, for not only had they intelligent and well-educated men to deal with, but to betray incompetence before young Graf ——— or Freiherr von und zu ——— would be tolerably certain to lead to unpleasant consequences; hence, men and officers acted and reacted on one another, and the officers were compelled to acquire at least the habit of command.

There were also no distractions in those days. The exhaustion of the country was so utter that social functions were out of the question. Hunting and racing were unknown, games had never

existed; so, except for shooting in the great forests with the rifle, chiefly at wild boar and deer, there remained absolutely nothing to break the monotony of existence, the routine of duty and the relaxation of the "Kneipe." And all this time we were making India and opening up the Colonies—picture the contrast!

Nevertheless, it is from these dismal surroundings that the present German army has sprung. The best men occupied themselves with study and thought, and their reading was assisted by the ample war experience of the older men. Naturally their idea took the stamp of the Napoleonic era. Jena had damned the Frederician school in their eyes, and skirmishers and small columns formed the order of the day, so that when 1864-66 and 1870 brought them face to face with stern reality, they still went into action with the same formations and almost the same distances as their grandfathers before them at Waterloo.*

Moreover, they still retained the same methods of training the recruit, ignoring the difference between the education of the young soldier in peace time, and his breaking into shape in time of war.

They also adhered to the Napoleonic type of battle; that is to say, the wearing down of the enemy by attrition, instead of the old line ideal of decision by a blow. Possibly, having regard to

* See Siborne's plates to Waterloo.

the above-mentioned system of training, they were right, but the two points taken together had an extraordinary influence in delaying the resurrection of the country, and also in augmenting the collective losses in the two latter campaigns.

The revolutionary outbreaks in Berlin and Baden, together with the very unsatisfactory campaign in Holstein and Schleswig in 1848 and 1849, somewhat rudely awoke the army from its slumbers, and the succeeding years showed a considerable degree of activity in all branches of the service; but the sexagenarian colonels weighed like an incubus on the whole army. Moreover, a very large sum of money was required to make good the accumulated wear and tear of material and equipment; and Frederick William IV. was not the man to wring it from his recently constituted parliament.

It was only after the accession of King William that Moltke received the financial support his plans required; and this point is worth careful study, for though in a sense it is true that universal service, and the conditions above specified, must have eventually evolved a man or men of Moltke's type, yet the conjunction of the two, viz. the king, with his rare judgment of men and his loyalty to those he had selected, and of Moltke and Roon, with their great intellectual powers, ceaseless industry and high sense of duty, alone rendered the victories of 1866 and 1870

possible; and but for these the extraordinary example of compulsory service successfully applied, which Germany now presents to us, might, nay, probably would, never have been evoked, and hence our own methods would not have been attacked.

Moltke was never a great tactician; of the three arms and their great possibilities he knew but little, and still less of the principles of training which alone can evolve them; but he was an admirable judge of men, and understood how to get the most out of those he selected, by giving them a free hand. He made the staff who guided the corps commanders, but it was von Wrangel and Prince Frederic Charles who initiated the revival of the cavalry, and von Hindersin who made the artillery; but none of them could have achieved one-quarter of what was actually accomplished but for the excellent junior officers whose existence the system secured.

FRANCE, 1815–1870.

If the reaction in Germany was severe, in France it was far greater. The ruthlessness with which the law of conscription had been exercised had caused the nation to loathe the idea of military service, and the one factor which might have overcome this universal aversion, the enthusiasm of the old soldiers of the Grand Army, was eliminated by the reconstruction of the whole military machine under the Bourbons. The regular army became a class apart, and sank as armies will always sink when they cease to form an integral portion of the nation.

As years went by, and the country recovered from the effects of the war, the evil of the paid substitute began to tell. To the middle classes the idea of service in the ranks was absolutely loathsome. Though the aristocracy saw no shame in the king's uniform, and would associate freely with their own class, even though the wearers were only private soldiers—and *mauvais sujet* at that—the *bourgeois* class were as prejudiced as, until within the last few years, our own civilians. Hence, large sums were freely paid to escape the liability of service, and each re-engagement

increased the gulf between the nation and its defenders.

Nevertheless, as a military expedient, the system of paid substitutes had much to recommend it under the circumstances of the moment, which precluded all idea of a great struggle for existence with a continental enemy. The army, with a strong backbone of old soldiers and N.C.O.'s, was a far more efficient instrument for the subjugation of Algiers than any adaptation of the Prussian method could have given, and it must not be forgotten that, even as lately as 1870, it was this backbone of old soldiers, N.C.O.'s and officers, promoted from the ranks, whose conduct alone won the tribute of Moltke's praise.*

The army during these years undoubtedly improved in efficiency regimentally, and Algiers provided opportunities by which many admirable fighting generals were brought to the front; but

* 'Pruss. Off. History of the Campaign of 1870–71,' vol. i.:—"'Whereas the junior officers did not devote their entire abilities to the service, the older subaltern officers were a marked contrast to them. They constituted as a body the best element of the army, uniting abundant experience and valuable personal qualities which had been matured in the various campaigns under the Empire. . . . It was these officers chiefly who, on the battlefields of France, sought to redeem with their life-blood those errors for which they were in no wise responsible.' But devotion and zeal will not suffice nowadays, unless they are united with a trained intelligence and a degree of intellectual superiority evident to even the most ignorant of the soldiers."

the rough-and-ready ways the troops acquired in Africa rendered them still more offensive to the civilians on their return, and the vigour with which they carried out their duties of repression in 1848, and in the *Coup d'État*, alienated them for ever from at least one-half of the population.

The real germ of decay, that rendered the defeat of the French army by the Germans in 1870 a foregone conclusion, had, however, little to do with the conditions of enlistment, but was a direct legacy from the old Napoleonic practice of the centralisation of all staff duties in the hands of the commanding general.

The evil was still further intensified by the formation and recruitment of the *Corps d'État-major*, which precluded the possibility of the young staff officer, under the ordinary conditions of peace service, from acquiring that intimate knowledge of the requirements of the troops and their capabilities, without which all staff training is worse than useless.

Given good staff officers—not mere conscientious confidential clerks—and the army of the Rhine in 1870 would have been actually ready for the field ten days before the Germans, as Moltke evidently expected, and a vigorous offensive towards the Rhine might have detached the southern states from the Confederation, and brought in the Austrian assistance on which Napoleon III. most

certainly counted (see Lebrun's Memoirs).* The decisive battle of the campaign would then have been fought not far from Jena, and had the French proved successful, it would have been their system, not the German, we should now have been called on to copy.

* 'Souvenirs Militaires, 1865–70,' by General Lebrun, Paris, 1895.

CAMPAIGN OF 1870.

MOLTKE overrated the state of preparation of the French, and underrated the possibility of Austrian interference; but nevertheless he succeeded, because primarily the system of short service had compelled decentralisation, and thus placed at his disposal, as the event proved, a competent staff, and sufficient men in each rank to assume responsibility, and thus to transform the dry bones of a mechanical organisation into a living organism which practically worked itself.

It does not, however, appear to me proved that the system of enrolment was an essential factor in his success. A short-service voluntary army would have evolved the same staff and leaders, and though the numbers forthcoming could hardly have been attained in any other manner—in Germany, at any rate—it is, as an abstract proposition, sufficiently probable that a far smaller army of higher average quality might have abundantly sufficed for the purpose.

The general idea in France—and also in England—after the war, was, and indeed still is, that the French were overpowered by sheer numbers and little else. To destroy this illusion, the General

Staff undertook a careful analysis of the statistics of the war, to show the actual numbers of troops brought into action in each encounter up to Sedan, on either side, and published the results in the 'Kriegsgeschichtlichen Einzelheiten,' Nos. 8, 9 and 10, and the general conclusion is sufficiently striking to merit the closest attention.*

But this by no means exhausts the case. A great allowance should further be made for the inferior armament of the infantry, the prime factor which led to the tactical confusion on the battle-fields, and though this may be to some degree discounted by the superiority of the German artillery, it must not be forgotten that only a fraction of the

* These pamphlets remain still untranslated. I have given a fairly full abstract of them in 'Military Letters and Essays,' pp. 5–11. Briefly, the figures are: At Woerth, 90,000 rifles and 342 guns in action—double the French force. At Spicheren, 26,000 rifles, 78 guns, against 23,700 rifles and 90 guns, French. At Borny, 30,500 rifles, 150 guns, against 50,700 rifles, 200 guns, French. At Vionville, at 3 p.m., 23,700 rifles, 8100 sabres, 126 guns, against 59,000 rifles, 6700 sabres and 300 guns, French; and at the close of day, still, only 47,100 rifles, 8300 sabres, 222 guns, against 83,600 rifles, 8000 sabres and 432 guns (including 18 mitrailleurs), French. At Gravelotte (St. Privat), 109,200 rifles, 620 guns, against 83,500 rifles, 550 sabres, 398 guns (including 54 mitrailleurs), French; the latter having the advantage of an almost unequalled defensive position. Finally, at Sedan, only 69,000 infantry, 800 cavalry and 595 guns were required to defeat and take prisoners 90,000 infantry and cavalry with 408 guns. Except at Spicheren and Vionville, other forces were at hand as reserves, but the fight was won by the fire of only the numbers given above.

batteries had been trained to develop to the full their fire power; and this was only the consequence of the movement initiated after 1866 by von Hindersin, and by no means attributable to any defect in the system either of compulsory enrolment or short service, as the results since obtained abundantly testify.*

The cavalry also were similarly overtaken before the changes introduced after 1866 had had time to work out their full effect.† (Note, the unsettled state of tactical opinion due to the introduction of the breechloader, being common to both sides, may safely be neglected.)

The above factors were solely accidental, and entirely independent of any system of recruiting; but there remains a factor very decidedly due to compulsory service without substitutes, which merits the closest attention, and it is contained in the true answer to the question, Did the compulsory service troops on either side actually fight as good troops should do, or did they not?

I believe most firmly that neither side fought up to its old reputation; but since the reason for the French relative failure lies outside the battle-field, and was mainly due to causes at work within the nation which have no counterpart in our own country or in Germany, I confine myself to the latter only.

* 'Letters on Artillery,' Hohenlohe (London, Stanford).

† 'Gespräche über Reiterei,' Hohenlohe.

The traditional standard of endurance expected from the old Prussian standing army was not less than thirty per cent. of killed and wounded in a victorious advance, and history shows this to have been repeatedly exceeded regimentally, even under circumstances where no special feeling of race hatred was involved. In 1813–14 this standard was occasionally attained, in spite of the short service of the troops, exceptional race hatred being the cause, but in 1870 it was never reached at all, for every attack died out and came to a standstill long before every third man was down. The full figures were no doubt often slightly exceeded on a whole day's fighting, but in these cases more than half the losses were evidently incurred either during retreat, or in the long indecisive fire fights so characteristic of the whole struggle.

The open formations employed tended to reduce losses, whereas the closer formation of older days tended to increase them; but the essential justification for the use of open formations at all was that the men would not face the fire in any other.

That "skulking" in the last war attained an unprecedented development, is sufficiently evident from the German slang term invented to express it, *Massendruckerbergerthum*, and volumes might be compiled on the subject, but it is only within the last few years that men have been found bold enough to come forward in public and trace the disease to its true source: not the severity of the

enemy's fire, but the want of discipline to stand up to heavy punishment. "The officers of Frederic the Great's army did not spend their evenings in winter quarters in discussing how the losses of the next spring campaign might be reduced," says Meckel in his Taktik, and none who have read the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (attributed to the same author), or had the opportunity of discussing the subject with eye-witnesses immediately after the war, will consider this somewhat sarcastic reminder uncalled for.

For those who have not perused the last-named pamphlet, I subjoin the following extract, which gives the gist of the whole matter:—

"I recalled my first battle in France. We did not arrive on the field till late in the day, and crossed it where the fight had been fiercest. I was already used to the sight of the dead and wounded, but not prepared for what now met my eyes. The field was literally strewn with men who had left the ranks, and who were doing nothing. Whole battalions could have been formed from them. From our position we could count hundreds, some were lying down, their rifles pointing to the front, as if they were still in the fighting line and were expecting the enemy to attack every moment. These had evidently remained behind, lying down, when the more courageous had advanced. Others had squatted like hares in the furrows; wherever a bush or ditch gave shelter there were men to be seen, who in some cases had made themselves very comfortable. All these men gazed at us without showing the least interest. The fact that we belonged to another army corps seemed to be a sufficient excuse for treating us with blank indifference. I heard them say, 'These fellows, like the others, are going to let themselves be shot.'

"The men nearest me bore on their shoulder-straps the

number of a famous regiment. I turned to look at my own men. They began to seem uneasy. Some were pale. I myself was conscious of the depressing effect produced on me by what I saw. If the fire of the breechloader we were now to face for the first time, while already its continuous roll sounded in our ears, had so disorganised this regiment, what would happen to us? I presently met with an officer of the Reserve. I invited him to join my company. He followed without uttering a word. To my annoyance my company had to make a short halt to allow the remainder of the battalion to close up. We therefore rallied the stragglers about us, and formed a strong party of them under the command of this officer. Two men, a lance corporal and a private, came of their own accord, and asked permission to join us; all the others were very half-hearted, and had to be brought in. Those who could do so sneaked away. The only effect of collecting these stragglers was to produce a bad impression on my own men, for, as soon as we came under the enemy's fire in some vineyards, and extended, the Reserve officer and his party disappeared for good and all. I reproached myself afterwards for not having asked his name; only the two men who had voluntarily joined us remained, and behaved gallantly to the end. During our advance, before we came under any really serious fire, and whilst only the whistle of an occasional stray bullet could be heard, we saw six men, one behind the other in a long queue, cowering behind a tree; afterwards I saw this sight so frequently that I became accustomed to it—who did not? But at the time it was new to me. Near the tree were little irregularities of ground that would have given good cover for all six. And this, said I to myself, as I now thought over the matter, is the result of three years' careful education in the independent use of cover. Would not Frederic's soldiers, who knew nothing of fighting independently, have been ashamed to present such a spectacle to passing troops."

The anonymous author of 'The Frontal Attack of Infantry' (translated by the late Major-General

Newdigate) was the first to put forward in print this side of the question. General Dragomirow, who had accompanied the Prussian armies in Bohemia, brought out the same point in 1877, and early in the eighties Meckel and Hoenig followed, the latter most especially in his 'Twenty-four Hours of Moltke's Strategy' (translated by Colonel Walford, R.A.); and the nett outcome of all the evidence I have been able to collect orally, and otherwise, during the last twenty years, leads me to the following conclusion:—

There exists in every nation, amongst the men who are apparently fit for military service, close on thirty per cent. who cannot be induced to fight under any conditions whatever. They may be led to the slaughter in dense columns, where retreat becomes a physical impossibility, but even then, if ridden into by cavalry or charged home by desperate spearmen, they will not seek to defend themselves, but throw up their hands like the Egyptians under Hicks; and, according to their physical condition, i.e. whether well or badly fed, in good or in ill-health, another ten per cent. are always hovering about the critical point—but as a practical concrete fact, none of these men can be induced to enlist under ordinary conditions at all —a large bounty may induce the fluctuating ten per cent. to come forward, but not one per cent. of this fringe can be induced to fight as long as a chance of "skulking" remains.

We may vary the percentage for different nationalities as experience and prejudice suggest, but judging each nation, as I am doing now, entirely by its own records, the substantial truth will always remain.

Given compulsory service, and every army must be prepared to drag about with it some thirty to forty per cent. of men who cannot be induced to fight under any conditions whatever—the proportion varying fractionally in different nationalities, and according to varying conditions of food, climate, and so forth—and I may leave it to any qualified war-experienced general to decide whether he would not rather have the room and rations these people take up than their company.

In defence of the extraordinary phenomena the battlefields of 1870 admittedly presented, it has been urged that the introduction of the breechloader has immensely intensified the strain on the will and nerve of the contending forces. This I am entirely unable to understand; the closest scrutiny of the battles and statistics utterly fails to reveal a greater intensity of fire delivered from a given front than troops of all nations have repeatedly faced without flinching.

But what this study does reveal is the astonishing fact that it took far longer for the modern weapons to inflict a certain percentage of loss than it had under similar circumstances ever taken the

muzzle-loader;* and since it has long been universally admitted that the moral effect on the survivors increases enormously with the rapidity with which the loss is inflicted, it necessarily follows that the strain on the nerves in the old days must have been greater than it is in the present.

Still, to drive the point home, we will drop the cumulative effect derived from increased rapidity, and take only the greater density of the dead and wounded within the ken of each individual. The actual number of corpses and wounded left on the field of Ligny was practically identical with the number which fell before St. Privat—Gravelotte—but in the former case some 35,000 men lay on a strip of ground 2 miles by ½, in the latter distributed over 12 miles by 2—i.e. relative density as 24 to 1.

The reason for this is not far to seek. The greater power of the modern weapons and the lower standard of discipline apparently attainable, both lead to the decisive struggle for fire superiority taking place at greatly increased distances, and thus the size of the target as it appears to the eye is enormously diminished. As with increasing excitement and the consequences of rapid motion hands begin to shake, the axis of the piece describes a kind of cone around the object aimed at, having the shoulder for apex, it is practically a matter of chance what the rifle is really pointing at at the

* Compare the fate of the French Imperial Guard at Waterloo, and the Prussian Guard at St. Privat.

moment the spring is released, and the chances of hitting the mark therefore vary as the area of the circle swept out by the prolongation of the axis at the distance of the object aimed at.

Eliminating possible errors of range, and variations of the powder charge, wind, refraction, &c., it is only necessary to apply this calculation to two known ranges to see the enormous difference involved.

Assume the angle of the cone described by the rifle to be but one degree, then since 1° subtends barely 2 feet at 40 yards, every shot must strike the man aimed at, but at 800 yards the radius of the circle is 20 feet, and the area of the circle is 1256 feet. Now since the vulnerable area of a man is about 6 feet, the chance of missing him must be in round numbers as 200 to 1.

It is curious to note how nearly this calculation agrees with known facts; in the Peninsula, only 30 rounds were carried per man, and in a set fight, lasting perhaps an hour, it took about four men to kill one of the enemy.

Nowadays we carry at least 100 rounds, frequently expending more, and the best practice made, viz. by the 3rd Corps at Vionville, with 45,000 rifles in action, did not account for more than 15,000 French in eight hours, with three times the amount of ammunition per man.* Allow for errors in range, &c., and the result is very suggestive.

* Compare Hoenig, 'Die zwei Brigade.'

GERMANY AFTER THE WAR.

THE immediate consequence of the war was to knit more firmly than ever the nation and the army together, and this was especially the case in the South German States, where hitherto, owing to the prevalence of the system of paid substitutes, the relations between troops and civilians had been uncomfortably strained.

Within the army itself, it was recognised that the discipline, though admirable on the march and in quarters, had hardly proved equal to the strain of the battlefield, and to improve it, further responsibility was conceded to the company officers, and by degrees the system of individual instruction now in force was, as a consequence of the above concession, universally introduced.

Naturally, too, since—except the youngest subalterns—the officers had led their men in the field, all work put on a more practical shape. The officers, having thoroughly won the confidence of the men, received the most willing obedience, and a phenomenal improvement, delayed only by the confusion in tactical ideas, immediately resulted. Such progress stands almost if not alone in military history, following on a campaign of such un-

chequered success, and was only rendered possible by the short-service system, which compelled every officer to devote all his time to instruction (which necessarily implies thought), and to the events immediately preceding the war, which brought home to every man of the army the suddenness with which war might again overtake them, and the consequences want of preparation must inevitably entail.

The unprecedented exertions France has made to retrieve her position, the enormous increase of the Russian army, and the strained position of foreign politics resulting from these developments, have combined to keep awake the energies of the whole service, and have furnished that stimulus to unresting labour to which all ranks have so cheerfully responded, and without which, lethargy must have inevitably supervened; but this is not all, over and above the progress in the army itself, an enormous change has been effected throughout all classes of the civil population. The million and odd men who returned to their homes after the campaign, have spread abroad through every layer of society a knowledge of what war actually means, and of the demands it entails on every member of the nation. Every branch of industry realises now, as in no other nation in the world, the absolute need of subordinating all private ends to the one great object of the moment, the development of the utmost possible strength of the nation in

the minimum possible period of time, for by this means only can the war be rapidly ended and business resume its ordinary course.

The importance of this can hardly be over-estimated, for by this recognition of community of interest alone can the internal resistances which attend the execution of any act of national policy be minimised and overcome. If the army itself is the machine which carries out the nation's will, the resultant will of all interests of the nation combined is the head of steam which makes the wheels turn round, and though with dirty, ill-kept and badly-designed machinery, the best of boilers may fail to perform efficient work, the best machinery may be paralysed for want of adequate boiler power.

The nett result of twenty-five years of unceasing effort may be summarised as follows:—

The radius of action of the cavalry, both in reconnaissance and on the battlefield, has been doubled; the precision of its action, due to increased uniformity and more careful individual training, has been trebled, and the possibility of its successful employment, resulting from the combined effect of both improvements, has been thereby increased in at least an equal proportion.

In the artillery, the worst battery now shoots better (irrespective of armament) than the best in 1870; its radius of action and precision of movement have been greatly improved, though not to

the same extent as in the cavalry, owing to the mistaken economy of still retaining, in many cases, four guns horsed in time of peace, instead of the full complement of six.

The infantry now is trained on one uniform system—though differences of opinion still exist, they are confined to polemical discussions in the press, and are absent from the manœuvre ground; discipline has materially improved, and they will never again court disaster by striving to monopolise the opportunities of the battlefield.

The Departments understand their duties better, and the mobility of the trains has been materially improved, owing to the higher class of horses they now obtain from the cavalry.

Finally, the staff has been completely regenerated. Uniformity of training within the regiments has given uniformity of thought throughout, and though this uniformity does not imply pedantic adherence to routine, it ensures reasonable uniformity in the grasp of situation and identical principles in the preparation of orders—the most essential factor of success in all organisations.

THE FRENCH ARMY SINCE 1870.

THE case of the French army is very different. Still under the vivid impressions of *l'année terrible*, the legislators provided the nation, notwithstanding the protests of practical men who understood the military needs of the situation far better than the reformers, with an almost Chinese-like imitation of the Prussian military law; but facts are stronger than paper theories, and the results thus far are by no means encouraging.

Though the upper classes—divided as they were before the outbreak of the war by allegiance to many political parties—sank all their grievances in presence of the common danger, very soon after the war had terminated party ties proved stronger than national interests, and the Republic rejected the services of some of the best men the country could boast of, besides making the service intolerable for hundreds of officers not immediately affected by the decrees of expulsion.

The conduct of the troops themselves towards the inhabitants of the theatre of hostilities had done little to soften the hearts of the *bourgeoisie* towards the uniform, and the suppression of the Commune had further rendered them detestable to the proletariat.

The young soldier, brought up to the age of twenty under republican ideas of equality, did not, and does not, take kindly to military obedience; and when the gilt is stripped off the gingerbread, and he finds that his military uniform is looked on as a social disgrace by the women of his acquaintance, his existence becomes a burden, and the barracks are regarded in the light of a prison. Under these conditions, only great tact and judgment can get willing obedience out of him, and this is precisely what he does not get.

Republican principles in their integrity should absolutely preclude the monopolisation of the commissioned ranks by any particular class, hence promotion from the ranks is an integral factor of the French military system; but since in time of peace, promotion would be so slow that no man could hope to obtain even a major's rank under fifty, in practice a compromise has had to be adopted, and one-half of the officers about are gazetted direct from the military colleges.*

* The following extracts from an admirable work, published in 1887, 'L'Education de l'Infanterie Française,' by Col. de Flêtres, are given in support of my position, which is founded more on my own observation and study of the French press than on any one particular book or authority:—

"No sooner was the war of 1870 at an end, than it was admitted in France that we had been beaten because our leaders were *des ignorants*."

"They reproached us with knowing nothing of geography, and nothing of the three arms or of strategy, and these reproaches were well founded. But what steps were

The consequences that result are very serious. Regulations have to be framed to suit the capacity of the weakest intellect, and hence it becomes im-

taken to remedy these defects? One might have expected that our general officers and their staffs would have been called on to give proofs of their extended learning and skill at the manœuvres. Nothing of the sort was done, but courses of study so complete and all-embracing were introduced into the curriculum of the school at St. Cyr, that a pupil who had mastered them thoroughly only required to be able to sit on a horse to take command at once of a corps d'armée. But up to date no such pupil has made his appearance; and the result has been that young officers who have passed through St. Cyr are jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none."

"As for the others who have obtained their commission from the ranks, they have usually owed their promotion to the qualities they have given proof of in their position as non-commissioned officers."

"Assuming that the authorities should adopt frankly and with all its consequences the principle of the independence of the company, the *début* of the new system would be somewhat painful. A large number of our captains, once master of their own action, would somewhat resemble the ancient hen who hatched the ducklings by mistake. Independence and initiative are admirable in the hands of those trained to use them, but how about those who have not this training? Those who for twenty years or more have lived in the grooves of ordinary regimental routine, see nothing of what is going on around them. They have no ideal to set before themselves, and do not know what is required of them. To their eyes their men appear to manœuvre or drill with sufficient correctness, and what more is to be desired? For themselves they are satisfied, the wheels of routine revolve with the minimum expenditure of power on their part, and they are well contented. Besides, even if sound ideas were to issue from the fountain-head, it would take considerable time to assimilate them in our organism.

possible to trust the company officers to the same extent as in other countries.

The military press blames the War Ministry for its centralising tendencies, but in fact the matter is beyond their control, and as inevitably follows on the conditions above sketched out as night follows day.

It is too often forgotten that in peace time

"Natura non facit saltus," and this old adage is, above all, applicable for men who are verging on forty years of age, and whose brains are closed to new sensations. After a certain age one wishes to continue to live as one has lived, without overriding the ruts of habit. . . .

"Actually we may say without fear of contradiction that our company officers have very little taste for the details of duty. The young pupils from St. Cyr do not go willingly near the barracks, and to judge from their conversation, they are not allowed time enough to pursue their studies. But to study what? Perhaps plans of invading Germany by penetrating through Belgium, as we recently discovered a sub-lieutenant with under three years' service doing. No! that sort of knowledge is not required in the junior ranks; but what we do want them to know is how to impart to their recruits the sentiments of true soldiers, and the knowledge of those details of the service without which an army is powerless before an enemy. It was, thanks to this class of knowledge, and not because their young officers were strategists, or because their non-commissioned officers possessed, many of them, a really high degree of civilian education, that our neighbours across the frontier were able so rapidly to overcome our resistance; such knowledge minimises friction, and just as the designer of machinery must keep the idea of reducing friction in his moving parts to a minimum, so must we, if we wish our huge machine for protecting our lives and country to work efficiently, keep the same idea before our minds."—Pp. 122-27.

social harmony within the regiment is the best possible guarantee for efficiency in the field. Necessarily, however, such harmony is entirely lacking in French regiments. As long as human nature remains what it is, the old lieutenant of twenty-five years' service who thoroughly understands his *mêtier* will resent the interference of his more fortunate brother officer who with ten years' service is still his senior in rank. Equally the highly educated young sprig of St. Cyr objects to the criticism of his grey-bearded captain, who can hardly do more than read or write.

Neither can they mix in society off parade; their tastes are different, and there are always the wives to be considered.

If things are bad in the regiment, they are far worse on the staff. Naturally there is no room there for grey-bearded old warriors, however great their experience with the men. The staff needs young and clever men in France, as elsewhere, and here the St. Cyriens have it all their own way. But because the rankers understand the *mêtier* of breaking in the young recruit, the work naturally falls into their hands, and with the best will in the world the St. Cyrien hardly gets the chance he deserves, but without the intimate knowledge of the man and his needs, which the responsibility of instruction alone can give, the staff officer is but a broken reed to trust to.

The best insight into the condition of affairs

within the French army is to be found in the columns of the French press, both military and civil. Of course, such sources of information require careful sifting and correction for party bias, but when every allowance has been made, the central fact stands out clear and distinct that the service is unpopular both to soldiers and civilians alike. Out of hundreds of cuttings I select the three following:—

From the *Temps* (1890):—"Our men are quick and of good will, but of love for their calling they have not a trace. The barracks to them are a prison; the colonel, the governor, and the officers warders."

From *Figaro* (1890):—"The youth of our nation is educated by very different methods, but these methods all agree in one point, viz. in instilling into their pupils absolute hatred to military service."

For the third, I have unfortunately lost the reference, but it is too instructive to be omitted:—

"To-morrow the reserves are to be dismissed to their homes. For the last eight days they have been killing the time on the glacis, rehearsing the simplest motions of the manual and close order evolutions again and again under the supervision (?) of their officers, former non-coms., who, for the most part, are totally ignorant. As for the 'active' officers, they long ago handed over their tasks to the others, and only occasionally came to look on

as matter of form; they at least allowed themselves no illusions as to the uselessness of the whole.

"The reservist brought back with him all the deficiencies he always has had, and will take them away again, just as they were, when he puts on his plain clothes, to bring them up again in two years' time. To ascertain this, was it necessary to keep him marching backwards and forwards from the drill ground to the rifle ranges?

"During the last week the military collapse has been complete; the word of command awoke no longer any response; from sheer habit the men were led to the drill ground, they 'grazed' up and down it once or twice, and then stood about chewing the cud of reflection. At five the 'sheep-dogs' collected the herd again and led them back to their stables. Many a reservist on his return cried out, 'My God! is it not a crime to keep us idling round here when there is so much to do at home?'"

Novels, too, form an important indication of the tendency of popular feeling, for books do not sell by the hundred thousand unless they strike the keynote of public desire. 'La Débâcle,' 'Sous-Offs,' 'Les Misères du Sabre,' 'Biri-Biri,' and many others, deserve careful attention, for the worst features they reveal are checked and confirmed by the reports of courts-martial published from time to time in the military papers, together with the important fact that a yearly average of over fifty

death sentences are awarded and, for the most part, carried into execution in the army (in 1895 the exact number was fifty-six).

The efforts that France has made during the last twenty years have been unequalled, and she has spent her money like water; men are there, and organisation is there, with all that money can do to render it perfect, but of that community of interest of all ranks, that uniformity of principle in employment, which alone guarantee great results in action, in common with the soundest critics of the country, I confess I see but very little.*

* Since the above was written General Billot, the War Minister, has addressed a speech to the journalists of France, which abundantly confirms the above views.

SUMMARY OF MILITARY RESULTS.

It will be convenient here to sum up the military advantages and disadvantages of compulsory service as far as foreign experience thus far has disclosed them.

We have seen, during the years 1800 to 1806, the gradual collapse of the old standing army system, culminating in the catastrophe of Jena, before the war-trained conscript armies of France, wielded by the unequalled genius of Napoleon; but the facts, as set forward in the preceding pages, fail, to my mind, to prove conclusively the value of either system of recruitment.

The Prussian and Austrian armies went down before the war-trained forces of France, not through any essential fault of system, but because of an insufficient motive power behind them, due to the absence of all sense of identification between the army and the nation. Everywhere throughout Europe, at the time, it was the dynasties, not the nations, that were overthrown by the French; it was dynastic reasons, not national ones, which tied the hands and forced upon them the timid, irresolute strategy which made defeat a certainty.

The principle of long service standing armies

was an economic necessity of the period; for service in the army being looked on as a discreditable slavery by the bulk of the nation, the supply of recruits required for a short service system was absolutely unattainable; but from long service all the evils above indicated inevitably followed as soon as peace became the normal and war only the occasional employment of the soldier's life.

From 1806 to 1815 we see almost exactly the opposite conditions at work. With the growth of the feeling of nationality in the other countries of the Continent, we find compulsory service cheerfully acquiesced in by all nations; and, though initiated under the most profoundly depressing circumstances, we note in each succeeding year a growing determination in battle, culminating in the desperate fighting round Ligny and Planchenoit, where these half-drilled levies stood up to punishment almost as heroically as Frederic's seven years' veterans; whilst simultaneously in France, as the dynastic idea again ousted the national, the quality of the recruits fell steadily, until they could only be brought to fight in the densest of column formations.

In 1866 and 1870, it was the short service system that vindicated itself—not necessarily the compulsory principle, for this was common to all three armies, the only difference being that universal service gave a higher degree of intelligence to the Prussian rank and file, whilst the paid substitutes

system gave a higher temper to the fighting line—for undoubtedly the strain to which both French and Austrians were submitted was the severest. They fought with somewhat greater determination until continuous defeat had taken the heart out of them, and, at any rate, it was not from the ranks of the beaten armies that the outcry over the unprecedented slaughter of the modern battlefield, an outcry as baseless as it was degrading, made itself at first heard.

Meanwhile in America, from 1861 to 1864, an outburst of genuine national feeling had shown the world how volunteer armies, even though organised under every conceivable disadvantage of time and circumstance, could fight; and as long as this enthusiasm sufficed to bring men into the ranks, this high efficiency, measured by the capacity of the troops to undergo punishment, was maintained. As soon as this ceased, and the ballot had to be resorted to, the fighting value of the troops thus recruited fell away rapidly, and, bearing in mind the far closer resemblance that exists between our own race and our cousins across the Atlantic than between ourselves and any other nation on the Continent, we have here a serious fact to reflect upon.*

* This is founded principally on personal conversations with American officers of both armies. After the three months' men had been disposed of—and the bulk of enlistments were for "the war"—the fighting on both sides has

Summing up, therefore, the military side of the question, the conclusion must be that, in the absence of any special national advantage to be derived from compulsory service, the military evidence is against, rather than in favour of, compulsion; for as long as the army attracts an adequate number of suitable men for short service, we can do all and more than has been achieved by any compulsory army whatever.

rarely been excelled, and this almost entirely irrespective of the period actually under arms of the men of the regiments engaged. O'Meagher's Irish brigade at Fredericsburg could not have averaged six months under arms, but it took 960 men down out of 1200 to bring them to a halt. Pickett's division at Gettysburg can hardly be credited with more than twelve months' average service, but only 400 men laid down their arms out of the original 15,000.

The attack of the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery (700 down out of 900), the desperate fighting at the Bloody Salient, Spottsylvania, are all cases in point, and many more might be quoted did space permit.

But once the North were reduced to the draft and paid substitutes, the rot set in and the skulking was appalling. See 'The Volcano under the City,' a narrative of the draft riot; 'The Soldier in Battle,' Wilkieson; 'In the Confederate Army'; 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,' Scribner; 'The Campaign of Fredericsburg,' Henderson; and regimental histories now appearing in the Journal of the Military Service Institute, New York, in addition to the stock official authorities.

NATIONAL ADVANTAGES, Etc.

GERMANY.

Compulsory service (without substitutes) backed by the pressure of the national will, freed Germany from French oppression, and brought about an almost unbroken era of peace of fifty years' duration. Men came to the army gladly, and after their two or three years' service, went back to civilian life immensely improved in health and character, to develop the resources of the nation which war had for so long held in chains. There was work for every one, principally in agriculture of course, and presently the accumulation of capital began; the army and the market it afforded forming a famine relief work on a gigantic scale, maintaining prices, and compelling the opening up of road and water communications.

Without the incentive to exertion thus afforded agriculture must have stagnated, for no other market was available, but competition insured an excess of cultivation over immediate needs, thus balancing the tendency to the rise in the price of provisions and their fluctuations, and thus incidentally, and as it were automatically, brought

about conditions generally favourable to industrial occupations, and these made such progress as the condition of unrest due to unredressed grievances (which ultimately culminated in open rebellion in 1848) would allow.

With the fifties, external complications began; France was restless, and Austria had proved by her action at Olmütz that she was a dangerous neighbour, and thus again the feeling of insecurity of tenure of landed property arrested development along the richest frontiers of the nation, for no one cared to invest in buildings and machinery under such unsettled conditions—the tendency was rather to hoard in anticipation of trouble to come.

Nevertheless, progress slowly continued; the opening up of the Rhenish coal-fields by railways, the tentative establishment of works of all natures, the abundant supply of excellent and intelligent labour, together with the splendid waterway of the Rhine, had all convinced capitalists that there was a glowing future before the country when once the menace of France could be removed.

The war once over, the hoards were all unlocked. Money poured into the market, new works were undertaken, fortifications pulled down, towns enlarged, and in five years the river was transformed—though not for the better, æsthetically speaking.

At the lowest estimate, I cannot place the rise in the value of land in the valley of the Rhine at

less than 200,000,000*l.*, and this represents but a little of the whole increment of wealth the war has brought to the nation; for from the Rhine the improvement spread backward throughout the land, and in Berlin, as the centre of commerce and empire, and the old Hanse towns of Hamburg and Bremen, as chief ports of export, the development has been still more surprising. Americans competent to form an opinion, but by no means inclined to underrate the progress of their own country, frankly admit that, except perhaps Chicago, they can show nothing more startling; and in England, certainly, the progress of Middlesborough is the only thing in the same field.

It is, of course, necessary to take into account the opening up of new facilities due to the invention of the steam engine, electricity and so forth. But these came over from England, and we only owed them to the security to life and property ensured to us, in the United Kingdom, by the prowess of our navy, which guaranteed the invulnerability of our territory against foreign incursions, and thus afforded the possibility of the accumulation of capital, without which their potential capacities could never have been evolved.

Reverse the conditions, and assume that England had succumbed to the French during the seven years' war, and America, Canada included, had remained under the French flag and its tariff; without an outlet for our surplus productions, due

essentially to steam power, our inventive talent would have remained barren, and the dominion of the seas would have passed into French hands. Whether the French Revolution would in that case ever have happened is a question open to consideration; my own conviction is, that it would have been deferred perhaps half a century, but would then have broken out with greater violence, and the clock of the world's progress have been put back nearly a century.

Sea power, briefly, gave to us the conviction of security, which, in turn, attracted to us the wealth which enabled us to rid Europe of the Napoleonic yoke, and ultimately to confer on Germany the priceless benefit of a fair field and no favour—a benefit by the aid of which she now alone exists.

Assume again, for the purpose of argument, that any time after Waterloo we had adopted the continental practice of placing a protective tariff, throughout the Empire, against continental manufactured products, and note the consequences.

Germany being potentially rich, if not in raw materials, at any rate in the labour, character and intellect which works the raw material into marketable shape, would at least ten, possibly fifteen years ago, have caused production to overtake demand, with the result of a congested labour market, bringing about intensified socialistic activity with anarchism thrown in—as it always must be, where the supply of labour exceeds the

demand, and most especially so where universal liability to service prevails. This is a point which seems hitherto to have escaped the socialistic propagandists, and is well worth driving home.

For the mass of the people, the habit of concentrated effort, taught in the army by drill, and the physical strength and health acquired by three or even two years of military training under the hygienic conditions of barrack life, always far above the average of their normal surroundings, furnishes a supply of labour, which is always in demand. These strong-willed, powerful men, inevitably drive out all the weaker competitors, excepting only the specially gifted experts in hand and eye, invaluable to every trade, but too few in number to affect the main issue. There remain, thus, only the physically insufficient; men deficient in strength and in character to stand the struggle for existence, and each fresh influx of the better men drives out the weaker, unless the demand exceeds the supply. Check the demand, and the ranks of the unemployed fill up, and the unemployed everywhere are those men in whom the balance between brain, muscle and will are wanting. They have not the muscle to work or the will to strive, but only the brain to feel acutely the misery to which the law of the survival of the fittest inexorably condemns them.

The one safety valve against the increasing supply of men over work which has hitherto kept

down the growing pressure which tends to rend the state on its horizontal cleavage in Germany, has been the free field offered both to men and products by America, England and her colonies. America has been practically closed to both since the M'Kinley tariff and the Alien laws; and were we to close down our markets also, the consequences would be most disastrous—but this is not likely to happen, and may here be left out of consideration entirely.

To return to the historical method. The flowing tide of progress advanced, as is most usual, in a succession of waves; each speculative boom was succeeded by a hollow of depression, and the balance each time remained in the mortgagees' hands, generally Jews. Those who went under joined the ranks of the socialists and inveighed against everything in heaven and earth, except their own incapacity. These men formed, as they must always do, the educated backbone of the outclassed degenerates, and they alone are the men who make socialist or anarchist effort formidable, for they have shown the courage to play for big stakes, and, as a rule, are absolutely impervious to all but their own interests; fortunately the fact that amongst individuals these are generally divergent, acts as a sufficient safeguard.

Such men, of course, exist in every country; in England we have thousands of them, but since the surplus of our working classes unhampered by

unfulfilled state obligations, i.e. reserve and landwehr liabilities, can always find an outlet in our colonies, the demand approximately adjusts itself to supply, and even in the worst periods of depression they form, as labour statistics show, but an insignificant percentage of the whole, and are unlikely ever to constitute a serious menace to law and order.

In Germany the situation is much more serious, as a comparison of the votes cast for socialist candidates at the last election to the Reichstag, 1893, and in England for the independent labour party in 1895, will approximately show.

Her dissatisfied millions, too, are intrinsically more dangerous, for though naturally, perhaps, more peace-loving, they are still, in spite of their education, which, by the way, they owe to conscription, far less broken into respect of the law than the inhabitants of Great Britain.

This was readily admitted by thinking Germans twenty years ago; they fully recognised that cheerful acquiescence in the existing law is not to be derived from book-learning alone, but is an hereditary instinct due to centuries of uniform administration, and this uniformity Germany has never enjoyed, for not only was the dominion of the Romans never as complete and universal as in England, but the countless wars and tribulations of the past two centuries, when ordinary law was

often in abeyance for years together, have undone much of the good already accomplished, and a generation or two must elapse before the same freedom and liberty of self-government which we at present enjoy, can be entrusted to her whole population; and that this is so, the steady growth of criminal sentences in Germany compared with the equally steady decline in our own, is a sufficient indication.

All the evils I have pointed out above, and countless others, are freely recognised by all parties in their press articles for home consumption, and except the *Kreuz*, the organ of the extreme Conservatives, they all unite in attributing them with growing violence, as one descends towards the left, to the crushing burden of military taxation, the blood tax, the iron heel of the military despotism, &c., all of which terms are synonyms for compulsory service.

Nevertheless, I submit that this is by no means the prime cause of their sufferings, and to prove it will proceed by the *reductio ad absurdum* method.

Assume that, on the conclusion of the Franco-German War, the French had acknowledged unreservedly their defeat, and unanimously laid down their arms, destroyed their fortifications and arsenals, and given incontrovertible evidence of their intention to renounce all thought of war for the future; and suppose, further, all remaining states had followed her example. The consequences in

Germany would have been that, in addition to the reserves called out for the war, the normal peace strength of the army, some 350,000 men, inclusive of Bavaria, would have been let loose on the already overcrowded labour market, and to this must be added another 50,000 who emigrated to escape the conscription.

The agricultural interests would have been seriously disorganised by the sudden withdrawal of some 5,000,000*l.* of Government orders for food and rations.

The cloth, leather and equipment trades would have lost similarly about a million, and Krupp's works at Essen must necessarily have closed down.

The issue of Government bonds also would have been enormously reduced.

Now, of course, all these matters would have adjusted themselves, but the immediate consequence of interrupting this steady and uniform flow of money (in all some 12,000,000*l.*) through its accustomed channels, must have been to give rise to the same effect on the machinery of social existence as may be witnessed when the driving wheels of a locomotive slip—the engines race at a speed they were never designed to stand, and if the steam cannot be shut off, the whole construction will be shaken to pieces in a few moments.

Now, with a nation, the steam cannot be shut off in a moment; the driving power is the pressure of labour in the market, which depends in turn on

the birth rate itself, mainly conditioned by the number of persons of marriageable age in existence 20 years previously. For a time no doubt, cheap labour, plentiful capital and reduced taxation, would have encouraged speculation, but the result must have been a worse series of crashes than those we have already witnessed; with increased poverty and suffering following, producing more violent socialistic agitation, which in this supposed case there would have been no army to control.

Now some five-sixths of the capital in German trade is held by Jewish capitalists, who, as in the past and present, are always the first targets for unemployed attack, but "every nation gets the Jews it deserves," to quote Lord Beaconsfield's saying, and these attacks would hardly induce the best to remain, hence they would have emigrated to the only country where they have ever felt safe, and when matters had shaken down, the capital would have been in the Bank of England's cellars, and not where it is now, and some millions more Germans would have been in Chicago and the surrounding districts, face to face with the silver repudiation, which would probably have already occurred.

From all this, compulsory service has saved the nation, and it has done very much more besides. It is unnecessary to insist on the fundamental fact that it has rendered the existence of the German nation, as a united whole, possible; for the

reply to this, from the socialistic point of view, is simply to question outright whether this is a boon to the suffering working-class humanity at any price: whether, in point of fact, the workman has any interest in the maintenance of any nationality whatever; and this question, under existing conditions, is a mere waste of time to discuss, for the average working classes of all nations, all over the globe, refuse to consider its practical application for a moment. It is not the capitalists who object to the employment of Chinese in America or Australia, or to free labour in the ship-building trade or amongst the dockers; and since political power is now in the hands of the workmen and not in those of their employers, and is likely to remain there, we can accept the principle of nationality as established beyond dispute.

Trade falls to the market that commands the largest supply of cheap labour, simply and solely because labour cannot be easily displaced like capital, and ability finds its best wages where labour is cheap; but by cheap labour I do not mean mere coolie work, but that product of character and intelligence which enables, let us say, a dozen English or German mechanics to accomplish paying work beyond the powers of even a million untrained Hindoos.

Now it is this cheap, perhaps it would be better to say efficient, labour which the German military system guarantees. No mere technical skill, nor

even high scientific ability, is of any avail unless each unit possesses within himself both the muscular strength required for the work and the character to apply steadfastly the whole concentrated effort of his mind, for many hours successively, to the accomplishment of the task in hand.

The point would seem to be self-evident, for the veriest child in these matters must see that the best workman that ever lived would be of no use in organised labour if he came to his work on uncertain days, too muddled from his last night's drunk to know his right hand from his left; yet this is the very point which, in investigating this matter, the average socialist invariably ignores.

The whole end and aim of all military training, wherever it is intelligently conducted, is to form in each individual these habits of self-control which alone guarantee a man success in after life.

The average trained soldier of any nation differentiates himself from the raw recruit mainly in this one habit of self-control. It is not so much the mere habit of sobriety arrived at through fear of the orderly room punishment for "drunk and resisting the escort"; this is usually purely illusory, for, when the certainty of punishment is withdrawn, the man is generally more prone to yield himself up to temptation than otherwise. It seems an assertion of his right to be considered a free agent, and in his early days of emancipation he feels that he is doing rather a public spirited

thing in asserting his right to do as he pleases—like the emancipated new woman, when she spurns conventional restraints. It is rather the habit of instantaneous obedience to the word of command on the drill ground which gradually gives him control over his own muscles through the nerves, and the feeling of pride in work well done which comes from healthy emulation, together with the physical strength and powers of endurance that accrue from the long months of severe exertion on the drill ground and the line of march.*

The barrack square is no longer the procrustean bed on which the recruit is stretched or cut down to a sealed pattern standard of mechanical proficiency; it is, on the contrary, in Germany at any rate, and in England it is rapidly becoming so, a school for the education of the psychic possibilities of the individual.

The value of troops under fire is due to the resultant will power of the mass, but the first

* The value of this training of the will to control the body is amply recognised by all medical men in cases of incipient hysteria and persons of weak will generally (*vide* Dr. Symes Thompson's Gresham Lectures, 1892), but there is no hard-and-fast line to be drawn between individuals of strong and weak will—the classes shade off into each other by imperceptible gradations, and in all, except the strongest, lies some shadow of "the natural cowardice that lies at the bottom of all our hearts," to quote Scharnhorst's remark on the evil of independent order fighting. The fact is also fully understood by the Roman Catholics, and forms the scientific justification of their fasts and penances.

condition of any resultant power at all is the existence of some fraction of it in each individual, and potential will power and awakened intellect usually go together; at any rate, unless some intellectual power exists in the individual, there is no possibility of controlling the manifestations of will power in any direction whatever.

It was to meet this difficulty, that almost immediately after Jena free education was introduced into Prussia, for experience had abundantly shown the delay which was necessarily incurred in the training of recruits if the latter came up in an illiteral condition.

Strictly, it is a mistake to speak of free education in Germany, for it does not exist; on the contrary, every recipient of education has to give in return for his teaching two to three years' service in the ranks, if found physically fit for the purpose. Hence, in Germany, education is no pauperising boon, or socialistic concession to the rights of man, by which A is compelled to stint the education of his own children in order to contribute to the maintenance of the large family of his drunken neighbour B; but all are being trained in accordance with a contract between State and people, in order to render possible the development of the highest fighting power of the nation in defence of its own interests.

In fact, whereas in Germany free education and liability to military service are the applica-

tion of the natural law of the survival of the fittest, together with its corollary, the scientific justification of an hereditary aristocracy; in other countries free education, without the obligation of compulsory service, is simply an attempt on the part of the "degenerates" of the nineteenth century to improve on the order of the universe as created by the Almighty, and to level every one down to the standard of the lowest intelligence.

It is this fundamental recognition of the duties of the State to the individual, and of the corresponding duties of the individual to the State, which differentiates the Prussian system from all pre-existing organisations, and, if borne in mind, will explain the astounding successes their method has achieved, and indicate its potentialities in the future.

Having obtained a supply of reasonably educated recruits, the next step is to teach each man individually the elements of his military duty, and at the same time, as his knowledge of these matters increases, he is drilled in "masses," progressing in their dimensions in order to habituate the individuals to will in unison the accomplishment of a given purpose. The same procedure is nowadays followed in all countries, but with this important distinction: whereas everywhere, except in Germany, regulations confine themselves to the execution of the word of command delivered, the Germans lay special stress on the manner of

execution; that is to say, to satisfy a German inspector, it is not sufficient for the company or other unit to shoulder arms, turn to the right or left, &c., correctly, but the order must be obeyed with the concentrated effort of both will and body —in other terms, with absolute smartness.

This has also been the tradition in our own service, fixed and established by practical drill masters in time of chronic warfare; and though for a time it seemed that the idea was to go the way of so many other well-tried traditions, emulation, and the sound common sense of the army itself, has brought it forward again with the happiest results—but in certain other armies, it appears to have entirely lapsed.

It is this capacity to will in unison, acquired by close order steady drill on the barrack square, which has given to German industry a labour-army at present practically unequalled in the world. The men individually are not better workmen than our own, far from it indeed, for the standard of their workshops in finish comes nearer the level of our "mistries"* in India, showing often the same defects of hand and eye, and would certainly not satisfy the requirements of such works as Elswick and the dockyards or the arsenal; but it is the certainty with which they can be relied on to work together in large gangs, with absolute concentration of purpose, and their ready and

* Native artisans.

willing obedience to their superiors, and power of endurance for long hours, which forms a force against which our own merchants are struggling, at present it would seem almost in vain.*

I have alluded above to long hours, and this needs some explanation. Many of our manufacturers think, and the evidence bears them out, that shorter hours pay better because you get better work done in the time, and the army knew this well enough many years ago; *vide* the regulations for the employment of working parties. But this essential point has been overlooked, viz. that though for the same class of men shorter hours mean greater intensity, the exact balance of maximum time varies between different classes of men according to the training each has received, thus, though infantry working parties begin to flag after two hours, sappers can maintain their full power of effort for four hours, and navvies for very much longer; hence, if our untrained working men may conceivably fail to stand more than six hours of concentrated effort, it is highly probable, if not certain, that the carefully disciplined German working men can put forth their best efforts for eight or even ten hours.

The above paragraphs provide a singular ex-

* This was the gist of the report of the working men delegates of the iron and steel trades who visited Germany early this year. From personal observation, and numerous conversations with German employers, I can abundantly confirm it.

planation of the growth of socialism in Germany, which growth has hitherto generally been held to demonstrate, in the clearest manner, the evils of the compulsory system; but the true reading of these recent labour phenomena leads to a precisely opposite result, as I shall now proceed to show.

Immediately after 1866 the birth rate began to increase rapidly. Falling for the moment in 1870–71, it then sprang up phenomenally in 1872, and culminated at 42·5 per mille in 1872–73, since when it has declined almost below the mean of the past forty years; at the same time the death rate has been almost continually falling.* Fifteen years afterwards the pressure of increasing population began to be felt in the labour market, and this was further intensified by the progress in labour-saving machinery (due in turn to the increase in the amount of capital available, which can alone render such installations possible). In the congested labour market thus created the strongest, as everywhere and always, necessarily survived, and the strongest were, of course, the trained and disciplined men with which the army was flooding the country.

But whilst the population increased, the demand for recruits remained relatively constant, and hence an increasing number of young men every year escaped the conscription.

This increased the normal discontent, for

* 'Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1892.'

whereas parents and elders felt it a hardship to be robbed of the services of their male offspring, those who were not thus selected found all good employment taken away from them by each annual delivery of trained soldiers, and naturally both discontented parties made common cause against the State, forgetting the services the State had rendered them in the past.

Moreover, as the socialists gained power, and were seen to be fighting the battle of the working men for shorter hours and higher pay—there being no really organised trades unions to fight these matters for them, as in England—many hundreds, even thousands, of reserve men joined them, only because their common sense showed them that their interest for the moment lay that way.

If the English capitalist is at times a hard taskmaster, his German equivalent is many times worse, being still in the same stage of individual evolution which our own *laisser faire* party passed through from 1830 to 1866; and no one can blame the ex-soldier if he fights them by every means in his power, provided always that he does not overstep the limit at which personal freedom begins to clash with the interests of the State, and from this danger he is saved by the common-sense view of things he has learnt in the service, and the instinct of loyalty to existing institutions that every soldier insensibly acquires from the mere wearing of the king's uniform.

It was the recognition of this fact, on the part of the Government, that the reserve man is the fly-wheel and possible brake on the wild theorists amongst the socialists, which led to the proposal of the Military Bill of 1893; for its provisions strike straight at the heart of the whole agitation by, on the one hand, limiting its recruiting area, and on the other, ensuring a still greater development of the steadying influence of the old soldier amongst the malcontents, and thus guaranteeing in the securest possible manner the maintenance of all action within the bounds of open legal discussion, for the one thing the old soldier may be most confidently counted on not to do, is to expose himself to the volleys of his late comrades' rifles.

For reasons of State policy, this was not the ground chosen to fight on; the Government preferring to put forward the enormous increase in the French numerical strength acquired by the Act of 1887, which had extended the liability for service in France by five years, and thus brought back to the colours all the old war-seasoned veterans of 1870, who, though too old for the first line, were yet an invaluable element to stiffen the ranks of the "territorials"; and, as a consequence, they found themselves involved in considerable parliamentary difficulties, for Caprivi and many other highly placed staff officers had on several occasions, only a few years previously, given themselves away by openly ridiculing the "Zahlenwuth," or

"La rage des nombres," which raged on the other side of the frontiers, by pointing out that, though numbers were easily found, it was another thing to find generals and their staffs who could be relied on to handle these enormous forces, and generally, the expert view in Germany was, that fewer numbers and higher efficiency formed a better guarantee of victory than greater numbers and lower efficiency, and the opposition did not fail to make the most of this opportunity, out of which the Government wriggled somewhat ignominiously.

But, it may be argued, if compulsory service is the boon to Germany that you have here represented it to be, why did it meet with any opposition at all? And the answer is a curious illustration of the persistence of tradition, even amongst the most "forward" of political parties.

A glance at the electoral maps issued in Germany for the election of 1893 shows that almost the whole of the active opposition came from the old free towns and the southern states, where the memory of the Napoleonic conscription was still rife, and where in Baden, Würtemberg, Bavaria and Saxony, the system of paid substitutes had persisted longest. I have above defended this system as applied in France, where minor wars always kept a large portion of the army employed in foreign countries, and thus formed an outlet for the really soldierly instincts of individuals, and where high rank might yet be won by exceptional

individuals with real passion for the service; but in Southern Germany things were quite different. There was no promotion from the ranks and no opportunity to win it, even had it existed; on the contrary, all men of education and real energy, realising that the army offered no prospect beyond a sergeant's stripes, hastened to escape from it as soon as possible, and only the easy-going, unenterprising men, amply satisfied by the prospect of a roof over their heads, and unlimited beer money, to be derived from the pockets of the young recruit, accepted "the badge of servitude," as a certain class of Frenchmen still call the re-engaged stripes.

The presence of these men in the respective armies was not unpopular amongst their easy-going officers, for they helped to teach the recruits, and gave an air of solidity to the battalions; but they rendered the army hateful to the nation, for they taught the young soldier a great deal more than his drills, and rendered the barracks a centre of corruption to the whole neighbourhood.

The complaints raised against the Military Service Bill in the Reichstag were true enough some thirty years ago—and the men who raised them were speaking of their own personal experience and knowledge acquired at the time—but to the true Prussians they appeared as rank blasphemy, and were most bitterly resented, as a reference to the newspaper files of the time will abundantly demonstrate. The Prussians had never had to

furnish drafts for Spain or Italy, and though compelled to follow Napoleon to Russia, had done so under their own officers, and had escaped with relatively insignificant losses, which had been entirely forgotten in the great wave of enthusiasm which swept over the nation in 1813; and the nation in consequence saw in their soldiers only the defenders of the fatherland, and no family grudged the sons who had fallen before the enemy. They did not like parting with their boys individually, when the time came, and the boys dreaded the ordeal as the average boy shrinks before the unknown of a great public school, but they all understood that duty came before inclination, and it only needed the insults lavished on their honoured uniform to stiffen their backs and make them forget all sense of individual hardship.

Finally, there remains this one great factor to account for the popularity and success of the German system. Service being compulsory for all, without respect for rank, who are physically fit to bear arms, rejection carries with it the stigma of physical weakness; and not only the men who have passed through the ordeal look down with half pitiful contempt on those who have not served, but the women join also in this condemnation and have their own methods of rubbing the fact in—and in every class the feeling makes itself felt.

In the lower classes, following the innate instinct of feminine humanity all over the world,

the women prefer the well set-up, smartly turned out, and self-respecting soldier to the ordinary working man in his labourer's clothes; and the labourer becomes suddenly conscious of his inferior position, and alive to his grievance against the State institutions.

In the upper classes this effect is even more marked. As in the lower, practically speaking, no civilian has a chance against the officer in the eyes of the younger women; and to make matters worse for him, he is, socially, almost an outcast at the court—a disability far more keenly felt in Germany than in England. Hence a man, whatever his rank, is compelled by the circumstances to serve as long as his strength holds out, or the army will keep him—and since the Emperor is no respecter of persons, this service has to be thorough; no mere donning of the uniform, and capering about on the parade ground on a horse carefully broken by some one else, will suffice. Moreover, the "blue letter" of dismissal is felt as a disgrace by the whole family, and few would be bold enough to show themselves at court for many months after it had reached them. Of course, the leading men of science, of the chief professions, and the Church, are all officially recognised; but not even the courtesy of the Emperor himself, can make the atmosphere of the court anything but distasteful to them.

Inexcusable as this state of things must seem

to English readers, it exercises nevertheless an enormous influence for good in the economics of the State as a whole; for in this way Germany has solved the problem of the unemployed aristocracy, and compels every man who inherits independent means to convert himself into a professor and instructor in the great national university, on pain of social ostracism should he fail in his vocation.

FRANCE SINCE THE WAR.

THE economic results attained by compulsory service in France, since the war, point a very different moral indeed, and even had the army emerged victorious from the struggle, it is open to question whether they would have been materially better. For trade in France was already too highly specialised. It was not mere drilled and disciplined workers—invaluable when it is a case of opening up new countries and fields of industry—that France required, but highly skilled workmen with trained hands and eyes, and these were precisely the men whose services she lost; for they were taken away just as they were beginning to be useful, and returned to their employments spoilt, not only through want of practice, but also owing to the totally different system of moral and disciplinary training to that which obtains in Germany that they had received in the ranks.

An army does not purge itself of idleness in a day, and idleness had been the curse of the old Imperial forces; giving the paid substitutes time to corrupt the younger men, and robbing the officers of the habit of work. Nevertheless, eco-

nomically speaking, it was compulsory service which saved the State from anarchy, and the fact deserves to be remembered.

Private credit had been disorganised and shaken; hence the demand for skilled workmen diminished, and the army stepped in to reduce the congestion of the labour market. Next, the vast expenditure by Government on fortifications, railways and reconstruction generally, acted as a famine relief fund. But by the time these works had been completed, private credit had re-established itself, and the dead point had been surmounted; industry could again go forward, though hampered by the restriction of expert labour.

Fortunately, there was no great increase in the birth rate of the previous twenty-five years to add further complication to the situation, and even the heavy losses of the war were advantageous rather than otherwise for the moment; and had the army been in a condition to work up the raw material, on the same lines and with the same results as are obtained in Prussia, compulsory service might have completely justified its existence.

But this was precisely what the army could not do; there was not the same willing and unsophisticated raw material, or the trained aristocracy to teach them, and even those of the upper classes who did remain, were prevented from

coming into direct contact with the men, for reasons already given above.*

The discipline of repression, not that of education, had therefore of necessity to be resorted to; and this is precisely the very worst kind of training for civil life that the soldier can receive, for it makes him loathe the very idea of subordination to his superiors ever afterwards.

It is, perhaps, the very best augury for the future of France, that such adverse conditions have not produced far worse results, but it is the old story. A few fools can destroy what it has taken the labour of many good men to build, and the evil wrought by a relatively small percentage of social irreclaimables may undo all that the heroic self-sacrifice of thousands has striven to produce.

It is not of the anarchists that I am thinking; they are a necessary consequence of the violation of natural law, and would be harmless but for the nidus of discontent ripe for contamination. The man who, owing to a defect in the French drill regulations, has never been taught to control his own body, jumps eagerly at the freedom emancipation from military discipline seems to present to him, and refuses to engage again in the discipline of civil life, by which alone great works of industry are rendered practicable. Failing native-born labour, contractors must take what

* *Vide* pp. 64, 65 *supra.*

they can find, and in Italy there exists an almost boundless reservoir of sober willing workmen, who flock over in crowds to the higher wages offered them. Germans and Swiss, too, who are not afraid of the concentrated effort which alone commands success, are ready to seize on every opening that presents itself within the great cities, and for each one of them who gets his foot on the ladder, a Frenchman goes to the wall, a ready prey for the anarchists; and, as man after man goes under, the seething mass of discontent becomes fuel for an outburst of race hatred, the consequences of which no man can measure, for war is now the manifestation of elemental forces free from the control of human guidance. In old days, if kings only fought for dynastic motives, they still had some faith in the doctrine of divine right, which implied a belief in duty to their subjects, and, at any rate, they were generally willing to risk the chances of the field in person; but in the modern democracy, the people who lash the nation into war are precisely those who risk neither life nor limb themselves. They stand to win fortune if successful, and, at the worst, have only their financial reputation to lose—a very different stake to that placed on the board by an hereditary monarch.

Against this danger, again, compulsory service is the best barrier which can be erected; for the reserve men, embracing one-half of the voting strength of the nation, not only see their own risk

more clearly, but naturally overrate their own deficiencies in organisation and leading, the effects of which they have personally experienced. Hence the sudden outburst of hatred against England in the French press, for the navy have few votes, and their feelings may politically be disregarded.

Compulsory service in France has done much; it has relieved the labour market and steadied the wheel of financial speculation, as in Germany; and, considering the unfavourable soil on which it was implanted, this should have been enough to earn the gratitude and recognition of the nation. Unfortunately, its growth has been retarded, and the good work largely undone, by the eccentric course of French colonial policy; for, at the very moment when it was becoming an unqualified success, the expedition to Tong King, and now again to Madagascar, turned the whole current of female popular opinion against it, and, as in Napoleon's day, this is a factor which can make itself felt. The women of France are perhaps more patriotic than the women of any other nation, but they possess also more than their share of female intuition; and, seeing that the colonies have brought them nothing, and that service in the army implies the risk of expatriation, though willing enough that France should win glory, they do not particularly see why their own lads should win it, and service is growing in disfavour accordingly. It was the women of France who practically wrecked the

first Empire, and it is quite probable that they may again demonstrate their power on the Republic; for the discontent they evoke reaches further than they can calculate, and works out its consequences in the individual, years after the primary cause has been removed.

CONSEQUENCES IN OTHER STATES.

SPACE fails me to enter into detail as to the working of the system in other states, but, briefly, it will be sufficient to point out that the remaining powers range themselves between the two extremes of the series, approximating to either limit according as the conditions are more or less closely related to those chief terms which have been set forth in detail above.

Thus in Austria, as far as my information goes, it appears to be working almost as well as in Germany, and has proved financially equally remunerative. Contrast the public credit and gold coinage of the dual empire with its paper circula- and price of its bonds in 1866.

In Italy the conditions resemble more closely those in France; the same feminine hatred to the conscription, a legacy from Napoleonic days, and something of the same republican tendencies in the masses of the plains remaining from 1796. Against these we must set the hold the Church still exercises over the peasantry, and the happy influence of the Monarch who did so much towards the consolidation of the nation. Here, too, we see the reconstruction of public credit and the introduction of a

gold standard; and if of late years the financial condition of the country has become precarious, the fact is explained, not as a consequence of compulsory service *per se*, but by the too ambitious thoroughness with which it has been carried into execution. Italy is in the condition of a manufacturer who sinks all his credit in plant of the latest and most approved description, only to discover that his income is not sufficient to cover his working expenditure, owing to the unexpected consequences of alterations in the market introduced by the independent action of outside parties, whose dealings it was impossible for him to control.

All the cases cited above—Germany, France, Austria and Italy—have had to contend with economic difficulties due to the action of Germany in demonetising silver. Had the Germans not been so precipitate in the adoption of a gold standard, France would not have closed her mints to the free coinage of silver, and the whole labour market of the world would have escaped disorganisation.

Without in the least subscribing to the extreme theories of the latest American platform, viz. a fixed ratio of 16 to 1, it must be evident to every thinking man, that the rush for gold has demoralised all markets; and had it not been for the steadying influence of compulsory service on the Continent, the consequences must have been far more serious than any we have yet witnessed.

Of Russia it is impossible to predict anything with even an approximation to accuracy. The conditions apparently agree closely with those of Germany, but the whole nation is in such a state of ferment, due to the sudden disruption of the social relations between the classes following on the emancipation of the serfs, that any forecast must be purely speculative. The people are willing to be led by their hereditary superiors, but the numbers of the latter are far too restricted for the part they are called on to play in the National University. Given time enough, and the army will probably prove the salvation of society; but there are causes at work that render it doubtful whether adequate time will be forthcoming, and if revolution occurs within the next twenty years, the reserve men may prove the greatest danger with which organised government may have to reckon. They will play the same part, in fact, as the National Guard of France from 1786 to 1792—the organised backbone of rebellion which opposed itself to the old royal army, and with greater possibilities of evil.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL RESULTS.

To work out a balance sheet to show the financial gain to the country accruing from all the above-mentioned conditions would not be beyond the scope of statisticians. In a long conversation held at Berlin in 1892 with the head of the Statistical Bureau of Prussia, he admitted to me that given a sufficient staff of clerks and adequate time, a very close approximation to truth could be arrived at; but having neither the clerks, the records, nor the time, I cannot attempt the complete solution—I can only indicate the points which seem to admit of no doubt whatever.

1. The difference in the yearly increment of public credit between 1815–66, due to normal expansion; and between 1866–96, due to the stimulus to normal expansion conferred by the sense of security resulting from the victories of 1866 and 1870, the consequence of capital sunk in military preparation.

2. The increment in the value of landed property throughout the empire, due to increased security of tenure, directly resulting from the removal of the dread of invasion.

3. The advantages of free education, introduced

into Prussia originally for better military organisation, together with the practical suppression of an idle aristocracy, either of birth or wealth—the greatest of all dangers to a state, as the French Revolution, and existing troubles in America, abundantly demonstrate.

4. The addition to the labour power per head of population, due to military training in youth; resulting again in a better expectation of life in those who have been through the ranks, generally estimated in Germany to be not less than five years in the average individual case.

To apportion an exact money value to all these gains is beyond me; but at the lowest computation it must be evident that, collectively, the result must far exceed the outlay by which they have been won, viz. an expenditure on army estimates from 1835–96 not exceeding 800,000,000*l*, and a nett expenditure of human life not exceeding, in round numbers, 40,000 (for the normal death rate in peace time, of about 5 per mille, must be deducted from the war returns).

During the same period over 1,000,000,000*l*. have been sunk in railways in Great Britain, and about the same number of railway servants' lives expended,* with a nett result of returning 4 per

* For years past the number of railway servants killed has been about 400 per annum; the rate was greater, though the numbers employed were less, in the early days. On the other hand, the numbers killed on works under construction

cent. on the capital invested; and, however low the value we assign to the factors above mentioned, we can hardly show a better return for the lives and money spent.

was very high indeed. The percentage of railway servants killed in the last ten years is identical with the percentage of German soldiers killed in 1870, viz. 4 per cent.

ENGLAND.

It remains only to apply the facts already arrived at to our own conditions, a matter of great complexity, but not altogether insoluble.

In the main, our position approximates most closely to the German standard.

A monarchy based on far firmer foundations than that of the German Empire; with an even larger proportion of the wealthy upper classes to act as instructors of the people, and qualified for the position by the training of generations to accept the responsibility of command. There is no ill-feeling between the lower classes and the gentry; but, on the contrary, in all questions of substantial importance the men will follow the "gentleman" anywhere—as the incidents in recent coal strikes and labour troubles abundantly testified—only, the man must satisfy the conditions the instinct of the men has imposed, and not every member of the *nouveau riche* order comes up to their requirements.

And even as regards these latter, their position is enviable compared with that of capitalists and *bourgeoisie* in any country on the Continent.

But what we lack, as compared with Germany

or any other continental country, is the absolute want of anything approaching an adequate motive, comprehensible by all classes, for entering in the race for numerical supremacy against our rivals. This motive has been shown above to consist in the suddenness with which the first blow follows on the declaration of war, and the terrible consequences which ensue on a state of unreadiness. War, it is true, may break over us as unexpectedly, but, rightly or wrongly, the nation does not believe in the possibility of sudden invasion. They do not arrive at this conclusion by the same path by which our naval strategists have rediscovered the secret of the sea, and do not appear in any way to realise that the maintenance of our ocean supremacy is menaced by the naval armaments of our adversaries, but rather they believe it to be the gift of some powerful fetish, whose good will can always be secured in time of emergency by much singing of "Rule Britannia" and similar ditties; and as long as this state of feeling continues, it would betray a hopeless ignorance of human nature to expect that a mere Act of Parliament could conjure up that unrelenting sense of duty, and ceaseless perseverance in all ranks, which alone has rendered the German army what it now is.

What such an Act would provoke would be discontent, as conscription invariably has done wherever applied when the need was not self-

evident to the country, and this discontent would find innumerable points of attack in any system we might essay.

For if the application of the law was universal, then the numbers it would supply, about 300,000 per annum, would be enormously in excess of our requirement in peace time, even with a two years' limit of service; but if it was not universal, and only the physically fittest were accepted, it would be felt as an intolerable grievance by all the families concerned.

If the service was only for one year, the men would at most only learn their drill, and acquire none of that habit of disciplined effort which is so invaluable to the German reservist in the labour market; and if, as has been sometimes suggested, the men were only called up for a few months every summer, the unemployed reserve man would become a fourfold greater danger than he is at present.

Moreover, the law could not be applied only to the land without affecting equally the seaboard; it is true that this would give us the "inscription maritime," but these men would require to serve for three years at least, preferably for five, and even then it is open to question whether we should get better men than under the existing system.

Finally, we should further have to provide a colonial army, and this would mean the mainten-

ance of our voluntary army at its existing footing, for conscripts could not hold India and the colonies except by an expenditure of human life which would create in the nation the same revulsion against compulsory service as we have shown was created in France at the height of the Napoleonic *régime*.

The sufferings involved would not be nearly so great, it is true, but news travels fast nowadays, and the details of even a single Peshawur fever or cholera outbreak such as we now bear uncomplainingly, would, if telegraphed to England, create a wave of humanitarian hysteria capable of wrecking any Government we have ever had or are likely in the future to secure.

If we adhered to a voluntary army for India and the colonies, no reduction of numbers would be possible, for our home establishment is even now hard pressed to meet the requirements of the foreign units, and if compulsory service were the common lot of every man, at what price could we hope to obtain the necessary supply of recruits? We might safely increase the term of service up to ten years, and thus reduce the number required; but every month after that would seriously threaten efficiency by removing from the young officers the chief incentive to master the details of their profession, and by the rapid increase in the death and invaliding rate which sets in after some five years' service in a semi-tropical climate.

It is sometimes urged that the conscript would acquire a taste for soldiering during his two or three years' training, and thus we should obtain for our Indian and colonial armies well grown, trained men, instead of raw recruits; hence there would be no need for our present depôts. But this seems to me highly speculative, and if the volunteers did come, they would not be of the quality we require. For if any conscript army were truly efficient, the men would not come forward at all, for life in a two-years' service army cannot be attractive at the time to the men who pass through it; it is all constant unremitting toil, with no play, and though when older men look back upon it through the vista of years, they may be unfeignedly glad to have belonged to it, at the moment of separation there is nothing to retain the pushing, energetic young man, and the only men who would remain would be of the type that used to re-engage in South Germany, men in whom the bump of cautiousness was so strongly developed that they held on to the loaves and fishes and were reluctant to face the plunge into the open market, which nevertheless must come sooner or later; but these are not the men we require for frontier service.

If, on the other hand, the training was an easy-going farce, the men we should receive would require to be worked up over again, and very few would be ready to face the ordeal a second time.

There remains, too, the problem of employment for the reserve men. In Germany, as we have seen, this presents no difficulties; but in England our conditions are not the same. Here, as in France, labour is far more highly specialised, and the trades unions rule the roast—and to a far higher degree with us than in France. Their opposition could only be broken down by counter-picketing and the sanction of the law to measures of retaliation in kind.

At present the law allows a blackleg to be kicked to death, or otherwise maimed, for a merely nominal fine, which the union promptly pays; but it takes no cognisance of the injuries received by the troops and police in the execution of their duty, and still less of the sufferings of the wretched blackleg himself, who, if not beaten to a jelly by the unionists, is compelled to see his wife and family slowly starved to death before his eyes. Would it be any better then, unless in the meanwhile the realities of foreign invasion had brought the truth home to workmen and lawyers alike?

We have also to consider the check to our colonial expansion that would ensue from the adoption of any continental system. Having once gone to the expense of training the men, the State would scarcely do less than retain the bulk of them as reserves for ten years at least from the date of their enrolment.

This, allowing for deaths and invaliding, would amount to about two and a half millions altogether of the very best material from which colonists can be made, men in the prime of life, with strong physical development and accustomed to hard manual toil, and their places would be ill-supplied by the younger undeveloped boys, who would emigrate to escape the service, thereby evincing a want of that self-respect and amenability to existing law which is so essential in our colonial population. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the colonies would be allowed to receive them, and hence they would drift away to the States and Brazil, to pose afterwards as political saints and martyrs—and Ireland provides enough of that breed already.

The nett result of the introduction of compulsory service, would therefore appear to be as follows:—

1. A colonial and Indian army costing in pay about double the present rate.

2. A home army whose efficiency could not be guaranteed in the absence of any sufficient motive to make officers and men work for it.

3. The disruption of our existing system for manning the navy.

4. And a ferment of discontent, which would develop the more, the better the purpose of the change was attained, for popular constituencies have short memories.

And against these drawbacks I can find nothing substantial to set—at most, an improvement in the physical development and powers of self-control of the potential fathers of the future generation—and I very much doubt whether the existence of the conscript army thus raised would inspire increased respect on the Continent. They know their own history, and human nature, too well, to be taken in by the show of mere numbers, and are well aware that the efficiency they themselves obtain is due to the ever present consciousness in all minds, officers and soldiers alike, that within twenty-four hours the words "*Krieg-Mobil*" may bring them face to face with the stern reality of the battlefield.*

What they do dread is the unknown possibilities of ocean warfare and our battle-ships. Twenty years ago, they may have been sincere in their belief that the sun of England had set, seeing that we ourselves had forgotten the secret of our power; but the publication first of Colonel Maurice's 'Balance of Military Power in Europe,' and then of Admiral Colomb's 'Naval Strategy' and Mahan's 'Sea-power,' brought home to at least one great power the reality of our strength; and at present not one responsible adviser in any country in Europe would dare to council an attack on England single-handed.

* This is literally the case as regards the cavalry and certain frontier corps.

This change of feeling has come about gradually in the last ten years, not only as a consequence of our increased naval armaments, but mainly as the result of an increased study of naval strategy. Previously to that time the Napoleonic legend ruled everywhere, and it was believed that steam had rendered the concentration of an attacking fleet so certain against our scattered defences, that the game was well worth the candle. The view put forward in the 'Militair Wochenblatt' last January (1896) exactly expresses this idea; but, when it was realised by the more responsible thinkers that we had been beforehand with Napoleon in recognising that the enemy's field army (or sea-going fleet) was the true primary objective in all warfare, whether on sea or land, doubts began to arise in their minds whether it would be possible to surprise us in this scattered position, and recent events have fairly shattered all lingering hope.

We may still be threatened by an overwhelming coalition, and for this, we should be prepared; but one quarter of the money compulsory service would cost us would more than suffice to meet the danger, and would be infinitely better adapted to the circumstances.

At this point my essay, strictly speaking, ends. I have traced out in detail the conditions which make compulsory service an unqualified boon to the nation which has adopted it, and those under which it is a heavy drain on national prosperity,

justifying many of the hard things which have been said of it, and, by indicating our own peculiar position between these two extremes, have arrived at the conclusion that, in the absence of all sense of imminent national danger in the community, there is no motive power of public opinion adequate to render its adoption a success.

But in the absence of some indication of the writer's view of the dangers by which we are now threatened, I feel that my work lacks the power to convince, for men often arrive at sound conclusions by very erroneous methods, and in a study of this nature it is impossible to bring out the full force of the situation without revealing many matters, which it would be unadvisable to place at the disposal of our enemies.

I propose, therefore, very briefly to lay before my readers, the picture of the war into which a misdirected outbreak of hysterical humanitarianism may at any time plunge us, and the measures—both naval and military—which it would then become necessary for us to take, with a view to showing that our present system of enlistment will, in all human probability, prove adequate to the strain.

Assuming a European combination against us, it is reasonably certain that, though our fleet may be overpowered, every British ship sunk will at least take one of the enemy with it to the bottom.

As against France, Russia and Germany, the balance in hand would be very trifling, and, even if Italy is thrown in (bearing in mind certain well-known defects in dockyard administration in all these countries, excepting Germany), the command of the sea would certainly not be considered sufficiently secure to justify the risk of invading our country. For some weeks, in fact, the sea would remain almost neutral, neither side being in a position to undertake any great operation, and neither in sufficient force to interfere vitally with the other's communications.

It would then become a struggle between the dockyards and private shipbuilding establishments of the two combatants.

Omitting the ships already in hand for the respective governments, there is at present in our private yards a very formidable fleet far advanced in construction for foreign governments, which on the outbreak of war would be taken over by this country, and which should suffice to establish within, say, six months the disturbed equilibrium.

Further, we can lay down in our private yards at least two ships for each one that our combined enemies can commence, and complete them in two-thirds of the time.

At the end, therefore, of two years, our power at sea must become perfectly crushing, and within less than a year our cruiser fleet should suffice for the protection of our supplies.

Sea-power alone can never bring our enemies to their knees, for railways, though a poor substitute for ships, will suffice to supply them with all absolute necessities imported through neutral countries. We must, therefore, raise a formidable army with which to follow up the work of our fleets, and this army will evolve itself from the conditions a state of war must create.

The shock to national credit will throw thousands out of work in all, except the coal, iron and steel, and agricultural industries.

To diminish the congestion of the labour market, and in order to feed the masses without pauperising them, an enormous army must be enrolled, the families of the men receiving compensation for the loss of their services.

Under like conditions, every country or city has had to have recourse to some similar policy, and where the heart of the country is sound, no permanent injury has accrued.

The population of these islands being 40,000,000, there must be at least 4,000,000 men, between the ages of twenty and forty-five, capable of bearing arms—for France with 38,000,000 has, after all exemptions the law allows, that number of trained men available. Our death rate being materially smaller, and our average physique better, if we include the ages from eighteen to twenty, we ought to find at least 5,000,000, without counting the help which would

assuredly stream to us from our colonies, who, in the absence of an established command of the sea on the part of our enemies, would have no other outlet for their energies.

Of these 5,000,000, at least 2,000,000, still of age to bear arms, have actually acquired some habit of discipline, and a knowledge of the use of arms, viz., the existing army and the auxiliary forces, taken at 500,000; 200,000 ex-reserve men still under forty-five; 1,000,000 volunteers who have passed through the ranks; and the remainder, ex-militia and yeomanry men, with a small number of pensioners from all sources, too old for the field but invaluable for training recruits and similar duties.

Considering that in 1813, with a population of only 14,000,000, we enrolled without recourse to more than the threat of the ballot 1,000,000 men, to enlist 2,000,000 to-morrow would be a comparatively easy task.

Their training also presents but little difficulty.

The mere magnitude of the operation would compel this work to be decentralised to the company officers; and, with the stimulus to exertion which the state of war would at last afford, in one year we could turn out excellent infantry, and in two, cavalry and artillery of very fair average quality.

America, in 1861–62, without any trained nucleus of officers and men, or any widely dis-

seminated basis of elementary military instruction amongst her people, did as much as this; and France, under all the drawbacks her enemies' presence on her soil entailed, and torn with internal dissension, accomplished almost as much within the space of six months. Can there be any question that we should fail where these have succeeded?

Out of our two million enrolled men, I assume we should have no difficulty in selecting a field army for foreign service of at least one million, for we can trust the press to educate the people to understand that the only escape from the intolerable burden the war must entail must lie on foreign soil; and though I do not for one moment expect that our scratch army would work as smoothly and well as the perfectly finished military machinery of Germany, I believe it would possess a sufficient fighting value to deal with the essential and nearest factor of the coalition, even if the coalition itself still held out. For coalitions are always weak, and three of the four countries with which we are dealing possess internal difficulties of their own.

The shock to international finance and credit due to the isolation of London will be felt in other capitals too; all labour would be at a standstill, and each Government face to face with a dilemma, either horn of which would be sufficiently disagreeable. If they mobilised all their forces the pressure on the labour market would be relieved,

certainly; but no nation could stand the pay bill of the mobilised army without recourse to foreign loans, and, with the increase in our fleet daily proceeding, no vestige of credit would remain to them. If, leaving the navy to do the fighting, the reserves were left in their homes, the labour market would be congested, and starvation and discontent would be the rule, ending probably in civil disturbance in France, Russia and Italy.

Taking all these conditions into consideration —and I have followed them carefully now for several years—I have little doubt that two years of the strain of war is the most these nations can endure; and at the end of that time, with the undisputed supremacy of the sea again in our hands, and 1,000,000 men in arms to back us, we should be able to obtain whatever conditions of peace we might desire, without even the necessity of embarking a man for the Continent.

India I consider perfectly able to hold her own, for this period at least; and as regards the bearing of our own population during the first months of privation, which must ensue till the crops are grown and our new cruiser fleet at sea, judging by the conduct of our working classes during the prolonged strikes of recent years in the northern counties, I am confident we have nothing to fear.

To many—and amongst this many I include some of my oldest friends, whose opinions I most highly value—my views will appear hopelessly

Utopian. I can only beg my readers to believe that I have not arrived at my conclusions hastily, and am by no means unacquainted with the thousand and one causes of internal resistances by which the efficiency of our armies are threatened; at least, I have nothing in common, politically or otherwise, with those who, having obstructed by every means in their power the evolution of our fighting strength, would now light-heartedly plunge us into war with the whole of Europe, and would commence that operation by the deliberate dedication to destruction of our Mediterranean squadron, by ordering it to force the Dardanelles. My views are based on the study of history, which has convinced me that the structure of our military machinery is in the main sound, well-proportioned and reliable—requiring only the head of steam which the boilers will generate when the hatches are closed down over the stoke-hole.

For let us consider how and under what conditions this machinery has been evolved. During a century and more of almost continual warfare, every part has been ground down to its proper proportions, every link and rod forged in the fire of experience.

But it has never been worked under a full head of steam—for the real conditions of each struggle have never touched the whole heart of the nation—there never has existed hitherto

any means of bringing home to the people the intensity of the individual interests involved; isolated posts and colonies may have felt it, but the whole organism was in too low a stage of development for the sufferings of the few to be brought home to the hearts of the many.

All this is changed now. The first shot fired in the next great war means a rise in the price of provisions of some 200 per cent., if not more, and no family in the country will escape this experience. This is equivalent to closing the stoke-hole, and the press and the telegraph may be trusted to do the rest.

Then the wheels will begin to revolve, slowly and awkwardly at first, but the friction will soon wear down the surfaces, and energy and good will lubricate the bearings—then woe to the individuals who try to stand in its way—there will be no space to spare in the columns of daily and weekly newspapers for the airing of personal grievances; the proprietors of the paper which tried to print them would be financially ruined, and the editor probably lynched by the infuriated mob.

For the common sense of the nation will then soon realise that none of our grievances and weaknesses are really vital to efficiency, and the worst of them, viz. the cheeseparing economy of the Treasury, and supercentralisation of the War Office, will disappear at once on the declaration of war. The former because it would not pay politically,

the latter because the work will be so overwhelming that it will have to be so subdivided.

There remain, then, only minor causes of internal friction, which have accreted during the long term of peace, and they are serious enough. But let us compare them with the similar obstacles encountered by other races in their struggle for freedom: the inter-state jealousies between the Allies from 1792 to 1814, and the quarrels of the French marshals in the same period; the absolute want of all basis of military education in America, 1861–65; and in recent times the terrible internal dissensions of France after Sedan. Had the strain come upon us any time previous to 1890, I believe our defeat was certain—even against France alone, I consider that in 1882 disaster was inevitable—for by no possibility could we hope to gain time to turn our rusty machinery round; but all this is changed now. The growth of our fleet has secured us this indispensable respite, and what we now have to do is to continue along the same line of progress our own experience has already laid down.

On no account let us be led into tampering with the essentials of our machinery, because a totally different design under totally different conditions appears to have given higher results.

Let us clean and perfect all rubbing surfaces by all means, and lose no opportunity of improving and strengthening the navy so that at last no combination of powers will dare to affront the risks of

open warfare; then we shall secure the best and cheapest form of insurance for our national prosperity; but to unsettle the whole conditions of our daily existence, to initiate the continental system, which must remain useless to us as long as our navy holds the seas, would be to play our enemies' game, and to hand ourselves over, tied and bound, to their mercy.

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